

JOURNAL OF INDIAN HISTORY

UNIVERSITY SUPPLEMENT

STUDIES IN GUPTA HISTORY

(ORDINARY LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE UNIVERSITY)

PREFATORY NOTE

THE issue of a University Supplement to the *Journal of Indian History*, incorporating restudies on important topics primarily, was already announced as being under consideration. It was intended to seek the co-operation of those who may be addressing themselves to University students, in the project. As a first step in the realization of the project is published here what was delivered by me mainly as a course of ordinary lectures at the University of Madras. This course was on the History of the Gupta Empire in India and deals with, among other topics, the problems connected with the history of the Guptas. The topics dealt with in this part are —(1) the Guptas in the *Purāṇas*, (2) who the Founder of the Gupta Empire was, (3) the Meharauli Pillar Inscription of Chandra, (4) the Founders of the Empire, (5) Samudragupta, and (6) Chandragupta II. These studies will be carried further in the following issues of the journal so as to lead ultimately to a fuller study of the age of the Gupta Empire. It is hoped that these supplements would prove to be of some assistance to University students primarily and those others who may be interested in the study of problems connected with the History of India.

For the benefit of University students, it is proposed to make the supplement on the Guptas available separately when it should be completed.

EDITOR

UNIVERSITY SUPPLEMENT

Studies in Gupta History

BY

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(*Ordinary Lectures delivered at the University*)

I

THE GUPTAS

THE GUPTAS IN THE PURANAS

According to the *Purāṇas*, of which the *Matsya* and the *Vāyu* are of the first importance for this purpose, the Āndhras constituted a dynasty of thirty rulers in succession and ruled for a period which varies, to a certain extent, in the different authorities, 460 in the *Matsya* and 456 in the *Vāyu*, but as the number of the members of the dynasty is not given uniformly in all of them we may take it roughly that the dynasty ruled for a period of nearly five centuries. The dynasty then, would have come to an end about the end of the third century A D, as we have good reasons for believing that the Āndhras made themselves independent about the end of the third century B C. The *Matsya Purāṇa* seems to have been composed under the Āndhras, and there is manuscript authority for regarding that it was composed in the ninth year of Yağña Śrī Sātakarni.¹ This statement in five of the manuscripts is that 'Yağñasrīh Sātakarni actually is in the ninth year of rule', but the manuscripts generally continue the list to the end of the dynasty and even include the local dynasties that held sway while the Āndhras were still the nominal ruling power. According to the *Matsya Purāṇa* which gives the list in the most complete form a number of dynasties held rule over various localities and for varying periods, while yet the Āndhras were in possession of their kingdom.² These are described as dynasties of 'servants of the Andhras'. Of these local dynasties, seven generations of Śrī Parvatīya Āndhras ruled for fifty-two years, possibly for 112 or 102 years

10 Ābhīras	ruled for	67 years
7 Gardhabhīlas	„	72 „
18 Śakas	„	183 „

¹ Nava varsāni Yağñasrīh kurutē, Sātakarnīkaḥ (Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*)

² Āndhrānām samsthitē rājyē
tēṣāṃ bhṛtyānvayā nṛpāḥ
saptaiva Āndhra bhaviṣyanti

—Pargiter, op cit

8 Yavanas ruled for	87 or 82 years
14 Tuṣāras „	107 or 105 „
13 Gurunḍas or	
Murunḍas „	200 years
and 11 Hūṇas „	103 „

Whatever may be the value of these purāṇic statements in regard to the actual number of rulers and the duration of the reign of each, the list is still of great value as exhibiting the political division of India in the third century A.D. Most of the dynasties mentioned in these lists of the *Purāṇas* figure in inscriptions and could be located on a map from inscriptional references. It will be found that the so-called Āndhrabhūtiyas held rule in the region of Śrī Paṇvata (Śrī Śailam in the Kurnool District). The Ābhīras had their authority in North Konkan extending into the interior as far as Bālar and taking into their territory Kathiawad and part of Gujarat. The Gaidhabhīlas were in the interior in the region of the Aravalli Hills occupying the south-western portion of Rajputana. We know that the Śaka dynasty held sway over various regions of India, one of their headquarters was Mathura (Muttara) on the Jumna. Another of their chief possessions was the region round Taxila (Peshawar) and a third, the region of Sindh extending further southwards indefinitely. The Yavanas had their territory in the valley of the Kabul extending further westwards to Bactria, and in their best days, their authority extended as far perhaps as the frontiers of Magadha at least. The Tuṣāras or the Tokharis, by which term the *Purāṇas* perhaps mean the Kuṣānas, held authority in the Punjab including Afghanistan, and in the very best days of their empire had an extensive territory which reached as far east as Sākēta or Pāṭalipura. The Murunḍas are generally held to be the native name of some tribe or other of these dynasties of the Kuṣānas and are referred to in the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta, along with the above details is made the statement that when these should cease to rule 'the Kila Kila or Kola Kila will succeed'. The *Vāyu* and the *Brahmaṇḍa Purāṇas* offer the additional information in regard to these last that they would rule for ninety-six years, and then Vidhyasakti would become ruler. From this we are justified in drawing the inference that before the Āndhra dynasty came to an end, perhaps some considerable time before, these local dynasties came into prominence and continued to rule for the varying periods of time ascribed to them, and from the general circumstances of the recital it is hardly necessary to make any special distinction in favour of the Kila Kila or Kola Kila. We may perhaps take them to be a feudatory foreign dynasty like some of the other dynasties, and Vidhyasakti's succession may have been to the territories held by these Kola Kila. What is a point of importance in the whole is that Vidhyasakti comes at the end of this period of rule, say approximately a century after these feudatory dynasties began a movement for making themselves independent of the Āndhras.

Vidhyasakti's name appears in another connection in the same context in the purāṇic recital. In the dynasties that held rule over the territory of Vidisa, the well-known capital of East Malwa, came at the end of the rule of the Sungas, whose territory it was preeminently, a ruler by name Śiśunandī. His younger brother went by the name

Nandīśaśa In his family were three rulers This statement means that a dynasty of five rulers successively ruled the territory dependent upon the capital Vidiśa from the end of the rule of the Sungas in that region A grandson, by the daughter of Nandīśaśa, is said to have ruled from a capital Purika, and this perhaps refers merely to a contemporary rule of this grandson and his name need not be taken in the regular line of the rulers of Vidiśa After this dynasty of five members Vindhyaśakti's son, named Pravira, in the *Purāṇas*, 'would rule' according to the same authority for sixty years the city called Kāñchanaṅka Of this ruler, it is said, that he celebrated several sacrifices called Vājapēya and distributed liberal gifts at the end of these to Brahmans This part of the list, winds up with the statement that four of his sons 'would rule as kings' There are good reasons for holding this Vindhyaśakti and his son Pravira to be respectively Vindhyaśakti and Pravarasēna, the founder and his successor of the Vākātaka dynasty Vindhyaśakti, according to the Ajanta inscription was 'a twice-born' man on earth (named) Vindhyaśakti whose strength grew in great battles whose valour when he was angered could not be overcome even by the gods mighty in gifts He whose majesty was equal to that of Indra and of Upendra (Viṣṇu) who by the valour of his arm gained (the whole world), became the banner of the Vākātaka race He covering in battle the sun with dust clouds raised by his horses' hoofs, making his enemies carried them to become prone to salute Having conquered his enemies, living like the king of gods he strenuously exerted himself (to gain) spiritual merit The Chammak inscription² of the Vākātaka Pravarasēna II gives an elaborate description of this family³ and in regard to Pravarasēna I it recites a very large number of *yāgas* (sacrifices) that he celebrated, among them figures the Vājapēya as well The *Purāṇas* use the term Vājapēya in the plural The inscription merely recites the various kinds of sacrifices which perhaps all of them were capable of being described by the general term Vājapēya It gives this Pravarasēna the title *Samrāṭ* a title somewhat similar

¹ Compare with this—

Dīradāndra gatischakōra nētraḥ

ṛṣipūrnēndu mukhah suvirgrahaścha |

Dvij mukhātamaḥ karibabhbhūva

prathitah Śūdrako ityagādhasatvah ||

Rc Vēdam Sāma Vēdam ganitamatḥakalām vaśikīm hasti śikṣām

Gūṭva Śrīvaprasiḍādvyapagata timirē chakṣusī chōpalabhyā |

Rājānam vīkṣya putram parama sadudāyēnā śrīmādhēna chēstā

labdhva chāyuh śrītabdām daśadina sahitam Śūdrakōgrnam pravistah ||

Sunara vasanī pramāḍa sūnyah kakudam vedaividam tapōdavaścha

Paravārāna bāhuyuddha lubdhah ksītipālāh kila Śūdrako babhbhūva ||

² F G I, p 235

³ 1 Vindhyaśakti

2 Pravarasēna son of 1 2 (a) Gautamiputra, son of 2 (married Bhavanāga, daughter of the Bharatīya dynasty)

3 Rudrasēna I, grandson of 2, through 2 (a)

4 Prithvisēna I, son of 3

5 Rudrasēna II son of 4 (married Prabhāvatiguptā, daughter of Dēvagupta or Chandragupta II and Kubhērānāga)

6 Pravarasēna II Dāmōdarasēna, son of 5

7 Nārēndrasēna, son of 6 (married a princess of Kuntala)

8 Prithvisēna II, son of 7

Balaghat copper plates of Prithvisēna II, *Ep Ind*, vol ix, No 36

to *Adhirāja* or emperor Pravarasēna I's great grandson Rudrasēna, the second of the name in the dynasty, married Prabhāvatigupta, daughter of *Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Dēva Gupta*. This last is another name of Chandragupta II Vikramāditya who had, by his queen Kubhērānāga, a daughter Prabhāvatigupta, according to a recently discovered copper plate grant of this very Prabhāvatigupta. She married Rudrasēna II, the Vākātaka, and issued the grant as Regent of her young son Divākarasēna as he is there called¹ in the thirteenth year. According to the Chammak grant of Pravarasēna II of the Vākātakas quoted above, which is a grant by this queen's son himself in his eighteenth year, he gives himself the name or title Pravarasēna II. So the name of Pravarasēna II may have been Divākarasēna and his title as ruler Pravarasēna II.² While therefore Divākarasēna gets to be equal to Pravarasēna II we can without much hesitation take it that the Dēvagupta of the Vākātaka inscription is another name of Chandragupta II. This identification of Dēvagupta with Chandragupta II becomes now equally clear—although Dr Fleet, editing the Sanchi inscription of Chandragupta II, doubted an interpretation similar to this of Prinsep, and suggested that Dēvagupta might be the name of a minister of Chandragupta II—from the newly discovered Prabhāvatigupta grant which gives the Gupta genealogy only up to Chandragupta II and furnishes the information that Prabhāvatī was daughter of Chandragupta II and Kubhērānāga. According to the Pravarasēnā grant Prabhāvatī was the daughter of Dēvagupta, and therefore Dēvagupta must have been another name of Chandragupta II undoubtedly. The late Dr Fleet's doubt whether Dēvarāja was the name of Chandragupta himself in the Sanchi inscription, seems somewhat unreasonable from the text itself. The grant is made by a subordinate officer for the possession of all good qualities by the Mahārājādhirāja. There is only one word of six letters gone from out of the grant and the context suggests the substitution of a word which would make the names Chandragupta and Dēvagupta synonymous with very little violence to the sense, while the supply of the words suggested by Dr Fleet would do violence to the context as it seems. It becomes therefore clear that Chandragupta II bore another name Dēvagupta which, according to that inscription, was the pet name of the sovereign. Chandragupta being therefore equivalent to Dēvagupta the father of Prabhāvatigupta, and therefore the grandfather of Pravarasēna II of the Vākātakas, Chandragupta II and Rudrasēna II, his son-in-law, become contemporaries, and allowing for five generations from Rudrasēna II backwards at the rate of twenty-five years, or even say twenty years, we want a century from the date of Chandragupta II to come to Vindhyaśakti. The Sanchi inscription is of date 93 of the Gupta era, and Vindhyaśakti's date would be, say, roughly the half century before the foundation of the Gupta era, in other words Vindhyaśakti would be a ruler of the end of the third century A.D. Vindhyaśakti therefore must

¹ K. B. Pathak in the *Indian Antiquary*, 1912, pp. 214-5 *Epigraphica Indica*, vol. xv, Dikshit and Pathak.

² A more recent discovery of a grant of this Prabhāvatī in the nineteenth year of her son Pravarasēna II gives him the name Dāmōdarasēna. Divākarasēna must have been an elder brother. The issue of the new grant by the queen in the nineteenth year of her son's reign is significant in the light of the evidence of literature regarding Pravarasēna's rule.

have held rule according to the purāṇic statement in Vīḍiśa, at any rate his son Pravarasēna I did Vīndhyasakti might have been ruler of the Vākāṭika territory to which his son added possibly the territories depending upon Vīḍiśa, and this part of the purāṇic list exhibits Pravarasēna as perhaps something of a conqueror who could celebrate the famous sacrifices permissible to conquerors to celebrate

Then the *Purāṇas* follow with a list which Pargiter holds to be that of the dynasties that held sway in the third century A.D. Of this dynasty, as of the dynasty of Vīḍiśa, the *Matsya Purāṇa* has nothing to say, that means the *Matsya Purāṇa* received its completion before these dynasties came into existence. The *Vāyu Purāṇa*, the latest redaction of which must have taken place probably in the reign of Chandragupta II or just a little later, gives these lists which are supported by the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* and which are summarized in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* another of the authoritative early *Purāṇas*. Among the dynasties that held rule in the third century which are supposed to have followed the end of the family of the Vīndhyakas, came three Bahlikas who held rule for thirty years. Then there was at least one ruler of the Māhīśas, whose capital was Māhīśmatī on the Nerbada, there were the tribes of the Pushyamitra and Patumitra with thirteen rulers. There were seven rulers of Mēkhala reigning for seventy years. In Kosala there were nine powerful rulers called Mēghas, the Naisāda monarchs, coming of the family of Nala, valiant and strong, 'will rule till the termination of Manu'. Along with this will appear in Magadha one ruler a very valiant man by name Viśvasphani. He 'will uproot all the kings and will set up as kings in various kingdoms various castes of people such as Kaivartas, Panchakas, Puṇḍas and Brāhmanas'. This Visvasphani, of great strength, as great in war as Vishnu himself, in appearance like a eunuch, would uproot the Kshatriyas from the earth and entrust the duty of Kshatriyas to others. Having satisfied the gods, the fathers and the Brāhmanas at the same time, he 'will go to the banks of the Ganges and hold his body subdued, and after resigning his body (apparently to the care of the Ganges), he will reach the world of Indra'. This passage indicates a further shifting and division of political power in India in the third century A.D. at the end of which arises a Magadha monarch whom these *Purāṇas* called Visvasphani, who, if the *Purāṇas* speak true, made himself overlord of all these by uprooting the existing monarchs, and appointing others in their places, and thus perhaps made an effort at bringing about a united India which the Guptas successfully did later. If this Magadhan ruler came at the end of the period he must have been ruler about the same time as Vīndhyasakti or his son Pravarasēna I. Are either of these two and Visvasphani the same person? If so, why should the *Purāṇas* refer to them with such different names? Further research must clear the point.

Apart from this question of to whom the name Viśvasphani refers, the general trend of political affairs derivable from the narration in the *Purāṇas* can be stated somewhat as follows.—When the decadence of the Āndhra power began the more powerful of the feudatories of the dynasty made themselves gradually more and more independent of their suzerain, so that, when the suzerain dynasty went out of existence, these feudatories stood out each as an independent power in its own territory. The working out of this process of

political disintegration might have extended over well-nigh a century. At the end of this period one ruler of Magadha, and perhaps another of Vidiśa, made an effort each to bring under his authority as many of his neighbours as it was possible for him to bring under his control either by measures of peace or by war. The Magadha ruler probably was Viśvaspharṇi. Starting from his inherited kingdom of Magadha he extended his authority both east and west; it may be north-west, and made himself something of a suzerain over the central and eastern portions of Hindusthan. Vindhyaśakti starting from the region about the middle of the Vindhya mountains probably extended his authority to take into his territory the region dominated by Vidiśa, and it may be his son Piavarasēna I who extended his territory farther, so that, at one time not very long after, the authority of the Vākātakas extended from the northern parts of Bundelkhand right down to the region of Kuntala in the south. According to a statement in the *Purāṇas* the work of Viśvaspharṇi, whoever he was, if he was a historical personage, consisted in the destruction of the political independence of feudatory powers and in the imposition of the authority of a central power over them. When that mission of his was accomplished he gave up his body probably to the possession of the Ganges and reached the world of Indra, the reward of valiant work on earth.

At the commencement of the fourth century therefore, the part of India that comes within the purview of the *Purāṇas* had reverted to the position of being divided among a number of independent rulers who might have been dependent upon Viśvaspharṇi before, and the *Purāṇas* recite therefore

1 A dynasty of nine Nakas at Champāvati, with an alternative Padmāvati, which is perhaps more likely

2 Seven Nāgas ruled in Mathura

3 A dynasty of Maṇḍilīānya held the territory of the Nishādas, Yadukas, Śaśitas and Kālatoyakas

4 Kosala, Āndhra, Puṇḍra and Tāmralipta and Champa were ruled over by dynasties called Dēvarakṣita

5 Kalinga, Mahiśa and the region dependent on Mahēndra were under the rule of the Gulias

6 Śīrī Rāshṭra and Bhokshaka (Bhoja?) were under the dynasty of the Kanakas

7 The region of Suiāshṭra, Avantī, Ābhīra, Śūdra, Arbuda and Māḷava 'will be ruled by unbrāhmanical Vrātyas, very like Śūdras'

8 On the banks of the Indus, in the territory of the River Chandrabāga and Kuntidēśa, and in the territories of Kāsmīra will rule Śūdras, Vrātyas and Mlēcchas 'of unbrāhmanical lustre'

These rulers will all rule simultaneously 'niggards in graciousness, untruthful, very irascible and unrighteous'

Among this group figure the descendants of the Guptas ruling over the region on the banks of the Ganges dominated by the cities of Prayāga and Sāketa, and the territory of the Magadhas. It will thus be seen that the Guptas ruling over this territory were one among nine states, among whom Hindusthan and a considerable portion of the Dakhan was divided. Scholars are divided in opinion in regard to the particular period to which this definition of the Gupta power is referable. Some of them hold it as referable to the period up to the

conquests of Samudragupta, and others would rather refer it to a period when the Gupta power was on the decline after the period of Skanda Gupta. Having regard to the context where the reference occurs in the *Purāṇas*, and to the possible date of the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, which is the chief authority for this particular portion, it would be more reasonable to take it that this position of the Guptas has reference to the period when, for the first time, they emerged into political importance. For one indication we get something like a hint that in uprooting the Kshatriyas and putting others in their stead Viśvasphami disregarded the distinctions of caste. The title Gupta in the Indian caste system is the title of the Vaiśyas as a class. Whatever their caste, the Guptas must have occupied a subordinate position in the region indicated in this purāṇic list. That they did so, we have evidence of in the statement of the Chinese traveller I-Tsing who was in India from about 670 to practically the end of the century. He stayed for about ten years in the University of Nalanda and has made a note of 'a great king (*Mahārāja*) Śrī Gupta (*Che-li-ki-to*), who built a temple near Mrgasikhāvana for some Chinese pilgrims, for whose piety he had regard. This temple the ruins of which were still known in I-Tsing's time as the Temple of China, was endowed by the king with twenty-four large villages, the foundation of the temple took place about 500 years before the writer's time'.¹ 'This would give this Mahārāja Śrī Gupta, a date somewhere about the end of the second century more or less. Without making a strict interpretation of the chronological detail given in I-Tsing we may regard this Mahārāja Śrī Gupta as perhaps the earliest known ruler of the Gupta dynasty referred to in the *Purāṇas* as having held sway in the region on the banks of the Ganges. But whether he was identical with the Mahārāja Śrī Gupta, the grandfather of Chandragupta I is a point upon which opinions differ. Without being too particular in regard to the prefix 'Śrī', it need make no difference by the addition or omission, as it generally follows the designation 'Mahārāja', it is just possible he was identical with this Mahārāja Śrī Gupta, the father of Ghatotkaja, or a somewhat earlier ancestor of his even. I-Tsing's reference has to be interpreted as referring at least to the fifth century anterior to him, if not exactly 500 years, and that would mean a date before A D 270. The century A D 170 to 270 would be the period in which this famous ruler must have lived. The Gupta at the head of the dynastic list will have to be referred to a time subsequent to A D 270. It would perhaps be safer to regard this Mahārāja Śrī Gupta as an earlier Gupta, possibly the grandfather of the Gupta at the head of the dynastic list figuring in inscriptions. The purāṇic statement therefore in regard to the rule of the Guptas on the banks of the Ganges in the third and the fourth centuries may then be regarded as a historical fact, having reference to the third century A D. The objection that there would be two Guptas very near each other need not be held to be insuperable. Instances could be quoted of two rulers of similar names having been very near each other in point of time.

¹ Beal, *J R A S*, 1882, p. 571.

Chavannes *Mémoires, sur le Religieux, etc*, of I-Tsing, pp. 82-3, note 3 (quoted in Allan's *Coins of the Gupta Dynasties in the British Museum*, p. 15).

If the statement in the *Purāṇas* regarding the rule of Magadha, etc., by a dynasty of the Guptas (Gupta Vamsajāh) could be held to mean anything, it must be a number of rulers by the name 'Gupta' that should have ruled, whether the term 'Gupta', according to Manu, was the caste designation or no. Taking this along with the statement in the *Purāṇas* about the achievement of Visvasphani that he removed the right to rule from the Kshatriyas and gave it to others like Kuvartas, etc., the possibility of Vaistvas with the designation 'Gupta' having come into possession of Magadha does not seem in the least unlikely. So, regarding the Mahārāja Gupta of Magadha early in the third century as stated by I-Tsing, there is nothing to make him a historical impossibility.

II

THE FOUNDER OF THE GUPTA EMPIRE

transformation under Chandragupta I. The so-called *Chatra* coins of the Guptas seem in all probability, to have been the issue of Chandragupta I to begin with. This was apparently imitated and improved upon by his grandson who followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, and rounded off the Gupta territorial possessions by extending them westwards to the sea itself. These coins are described in two varieties by Mr Allan of the British Museum. One coin illustrated as C. 1 of plate VIII from the collection of Sir William Hoey shows one variety of the *Chatra* type. There seems to be so far a few other specimens of this variety in the Imperial Museum at Calcutta. This variety apart from the noticeable distinction in the figure of the monarch and the umbrella bearer contains the obverse legend Chandragupta merely, with the reverse legend Vikramāditya. The second variety also has the same reverse legend, but the obverse legend is a longer one copied apparently from one of the several legends of Samudragupta, and does not contain the name Chandragupta. The character of the obverse legend and the noticeably distinct character of the features would perhaps warrant the assumption that the Hoey specimen was issued from the mint of Chandragupta I. The only objection to it is that so far we have not come upon other specimens of any coin of Chandragupta I. This is hardly an argument. If the coins of the Guptas that have so far been found are all of them ascribed to others there will be nothing left to ascribe to Chandragupta I. That Chandragupta issued coins of his own would only be in keeping with the position of one who from a feudatory Mahārājā rose to the position of an imperial ruler. These coins of the *Chatra* type as also the coins ascribed to Samudragupta are generally taken by numismatists to have been formed on the model of the Kushāna coins of the last of the great Kushānas, Vāsudēva. There is no special reason why Samudragupta should have imitated them rather than his father Chandragupta I. But, if his Lichchavi alliance meant anything, it must have brought Chandragupta I's territory into touch with the territories of the Kushāna Vāsudēva. If the idea dawned upon him of signaling his accession to an imperial position by the issue of a coinage, here was material for him to copy. It would not be unreasonable therefore to take it that Chandragupta I issued his coinage, and if that is so, the one variety rather than another that would be appropriate would be the *Chatra* type. The umbrella of sovereignty is an ordinary notion of the Indian as symbolical of elevation to a ruling position, and the single umbrella is equally symbolical of an imperial position. For the monarch therefore that gave himself, the title Mahārājādhīrāja, the first *Adhirāja* among the Guptas, it would be perfectly natural to issue the first coins of the Guptas, and he had the originality to invent the *Chatra* coin indicating his accession to the newly won imperial position.

If the Lichchavi connection had been mainly responsible for this, it is not difficult to understand that in all these, he associated with himself the queen whose marriage with him set him forward on his imperial career. The goddess Lakshmi on the reverse with a fillet in her right hand is again an additional support to this conclusion. It seems therefore best to regard Chandragupta I as a conqueror who, starting from the matrimonial acquisition of the territory of the Lichchavis, made distinct forward advance and acquired the territory of

others by reducing the neighbouring rājas to subservience to him to the extent of assuming an imperial position and titles with some justification in the eyes of his contemporaries

The so-called marriage type of coins ascribed by H. Allan to Samudragupta, must from this point of view, be ascribed to Chandragupta I as has been done by the late Vincent Smith and others. This variety of Gupta coins contains on the obverse the representation of both Chandragupta and Kumāradēvi with their names marked, and on the reverse a nimbate female figure seated on a throne below which is a lion lying quietly with the legend 'Lichchavayali'. It is unanimously admitted that this type of coin, or medal as some prefer to call it, celebrates the marriage of Chandragupta and Kumāradēvi, at the same time commemorating the union of the Lichchavis with the Magadhas under Chandragupta. It is not clear why the goddess has been named 'Lakshmi' with the lion lying couchant in the manner indicated in the coins. I have not been able to come upon anything that would associate the lion with Lakshmi, as her vehicle. The simple legend Lichchavayah seems rather to indicate that the nimbate goddess is a personified representation of the Lichchavi people, and the lion is perhaps a totemic or other representation of the same people. If the goddess were the goddess of the Lichchavis and the lion their totem or other symbol, it would mean that the coin was intended to celebrate the alliance of the Lichchavis brought about by the marriage of the Gupta ruler with the heiress of the Lichchavis. This position however is not accepted by numismatists, and the difficulties in the way of their accepting it is set forth with great clearness and ability by Mr J. Allan of the British Museum. 'That they commemorate the marriage of Chandragupta I and Kumāradēvi and the union with the Lichchavis is certain, but to the numismatist there are certain difficulties in the way of their attribution to Chandragupta I, the commonest coins of Samudragupta, the son and successor of Chandragupta I, are of the type to which Vincent Smith has given a name 'Spearman' or 'Javelin' but which may more correctly be called 'the standard type' (See Section 74). It is evident that Samudragupta's standard type is a close copy of the later coins of Kushān type, such as have been described by Cunningham (Num. Chron. 1893, pl. VIII 2-12 and pl. IX), practically the only alteration apart from the legends are on the obverse, where the Kushān peaked headdress is replaced by a close-fitting cap, while the trident on the left gives place to a *garuda* standard (*Garuda-dhvaja*), the emblem of Vishnu. The king's name is still written vertically, this custom, which was to survive till the end of the dynasty, is to be traced back through the later Kushān coinage to Chinese influence in Central Asia. The reverse type is even more slavishly copied, as we find portions of the back of the throne on the Śaka coins reproduced along with the symbol. The Samudragupta coins are one step removed from this prototype by the addition of the figure of the queen on the obverse and the substitution of a lion for throne on the reverse, though the now meaningless trace of the back of the throne remains the resemblance to the late Kushān coins is still quite marked, it may safely be asserted that Chandragupta I did not strike any coins of the standard type, if he had, they must have been commoner than the 'medallic' pieces ascribed to him and would have survived, but none such are known. Samudragupta did not receive

the Guptas, and even give an idea as to the means by which this exaltation of the local dynasty was achieved, Chandragupta I or Samudragupta, whoever was the author of the marriage type, of coins must be given credit, and the same ruler must be held responsible for all the details of the devices and legends, admitting of imitation only in respect of the shape, size and the mechanical character of the workmanship, and perhaps even a general idea of the representation of royalty and divinities on the coins. This is the most that could be conceded in the circumstances. Since the idea of celebrating the marriage is an idea of the Guptas admittedly, the representation of the king and queen must be their own, and the idea that the influence and the prestige acquired by the Lichchavi alliance must be somehow indicated, should also have been theirs. In order to do this with the idea formed already, it is hardly necessary that one should be actually in the region where the Kushān coins were in circulation, or that the Kushān coins should have been largely in circulation in Magadha at the time. One specimen would have done the business and that specimen could have been obtained even from a neighbouring foreign country. The real point of importance is who was it that was anxious that this historical event should receive some kind of embodiment with a view to circulation in the expanding territories of the empire. It is clear that Chandragupta I should really have had more enthusiasm for the issue of such a coinage than Samudragupta. It is not quite impossible that Samudragupta might have issued the coinage, but at the time of issue Chandragupta I must have died and it is possible that his queen consort was also dead. Samudragupta's motive therefore for perpetuating this alliance cannot be regarded as quite so clear as it must have been in the case of Chandragupta I. After all there is nothing against the possibility of Chandragupta I having come into contact with the Kushānas along their eastern frontier, if he did not actually fight against them. The Guptas were already in possession of Magadha and the territories dependent upon Saketa and Allahabad. The marriage with the Lichchavi and the acquisition of their territory must have rounded off their frontier and brought the united territory at any rate to the Ganges if not farther west. The next step in advance of the Gupta power would surely have taken them to the territory of the Nāgas in Mithra and Padmāvati. Without even this achievement it is hard to understand how the Guptas could have put forward any pretensions to an imperial position with the slightest possibility of this being suffered or tolerated. On the face of it, it would seem likely that it is by an achievement against the Kushāns, at least in the eastern half of their dominions that Chandragupta I should have gone forward to assume the imperial title of Mahārājādhirāja. The issue of coins of the *Chatra* type would be directly symbolical of this assumption, and the marriage coins would only take him one step further forward in the same direction. If, therefore, Chandragupta I adopted deliberately a plan of issuing these coins it was possible for him to have obtained not only coin specimens but even workmen engaged in the mints from the neighbouring realm of the Kushāns whether he had come into contact with them politically or no. It seems therefore very probable that Chandragupta I took the pains to issue the coins under the most favourable circumstances. If he had actually done so it would

explain the excellent turnout of the coins of these varieties as compared with the later issue from the mints of Magadha

The detail regarding the Ardachso throne seems to be made a little too much of for a detail of that kind. As far as one could see from the available coins there is nothing peculiar to the throne to be called the 'Ardachso throne'. The seat or settle, with a back or without, is the form of raised seat universally adopted in all the temples of India at the present time, and seems to have been from time immemorial the sort of seat that royalty and the people of distinction are usually provided. The *Vajrāsana*, the *Simhāsana* and other kinds of *āsanas* are of that pattern, and there is hardly any reason to associate it in coins with the Sassanian Ardachso. If the coin had been formed on the Kushano-Sassanian coin it is likely that this detail was also copied, but there is hardly any need for this assumption. If a goddess is to be seated, it must be on some kind of a throne, and this is the most usual kind of throne that the Indians were aware of, so common in fact that this is imitated in stone and stucco, and constitutes the ordinary kind of seat even in middle-class houses. If the goddess of the Lichchavis is adopted, she must be seated on a throne. If the lion is somehow associated with the Lichchavis symbolical either of their valour or constituting merely the totem of the tribe or tribes that inhabited the region of which from time immemorial *Simhabhūmi* formed a part, the idea seems to have been merely to indicate the goddess seated on a throne, the lion symbolical of the people lying couchant beneath her seat. There seems no particular warrant for regarding the goddess as Lakshmi as she is rarely associated with the lion in any manner. It is just possible that she represents in a general way the 'Sri' or prosperity of the Lichchavis, or it may be a representation of the Indian Goddess of Victory. It must be noted here that the Ikshvākus and the Śakyas had the lion for their emblem, the Buddha claimed it as a Śākya and as a descendant of Ikshvāku. The title Śākyasinha applied to him may contain a reference to this.

The attenuation of the details of the throne noticed by Mr Allan in the coins he quotes in illustration, is due to the effort of the artist to make the chair not obstruct the vision of the lion. In this effort the thinning goes on so far as to make the throne disappear as the diaphanous dresses of women folk represented in paintings and statuary work. It seems therefore building too much, to build a theory of the chronological evolution of coins on a detail like the 'Ardachso throne'. The peculiar difficulties of the numismatists lose very considerably in force, and in respect of the issue of these coins historical probabilities might be given the deciding influence. The superior workmanship of the coins is explained by the importation of workmen accustomed to their work, and the line of evolution need not be and had not always been, along the lines of progress. Retrogression is always possible. Samudragupta seems to have been out and out a man of literary taste, with a single exception he never gives his coins a simple device on the obverse, and the inscription on the reverse has always some organic relation to the longer and more descriptive device on the obverse. These characteristics of his devices are absent in the two varieties with which we are particularly concerned. We may therefore conclude that both the *Chatra* type with the simpler obverse legend a marriage

type were issues of Gupta coins by Chandragupta I himself not by Chandragupta II and Samudragupta respectively. This conclusion would naturally lead us on to the consideration of the posthumous Mehrauli inscription of a ruler by name Chandra to which we shall proceed.

III

MEHRAULI PILLAR INSCRIPTION OF CHANDRA ¹

Mehrauli, the corrupt form of Mihrapuri, is a village about nine miles south of Delhi containing the famous Kutub Minar. In the courtyard of the building, and not far from the great Kutub, is the Iron Pillar bearing this record of Chandra. According to Fleet, 'The characters belong to the northern class of alphabets, and allowing for the stiffness resulting from engraving in so hard a substance as the iron of this column, they approximate in many respects very closely to those of the Allahabad posthumous Pillar inscription of ² Samudragupta'.

According to V. A. Smith 'the late Dr Hærnle, the greatest authority on this subject' is of a similar opinion so far as the palæography of the record is concerned.

The record is in perfect preservation and there is no doubtful reading in it with the possible exception of only one letter, even in regard to which the difference seems to be not so much in regard to its character as the interpretation of the word *dhavēna* in line 6 of the inscription. Notwithstanding the fact that the first letter *dh* is unlike the *dh* occurring 'six times in the record elsewhere', it admits of little doubt that it is a *dh* that was meant. The only defect is an unmeant break in the loop. I am assured that the form *dhavēna*³ is correct in the sense of pure, cleansed, etc. Hence there is no need to look for a proper name *Dhava* as that of *Chandra*. The name of the ruler is undoubtedly Chandra, as it is described Chandrāhva, named Chandra clearly, notwithstanding the comparison that follows. The record may then be translated as below with the text

- 1 Yasyōdvarttīyatah pratīpamurasā ' Satrūn samētyāgatān ⁴ Vangēshvāhavaritnū—bhūlikhitā khaḍgēna kīrtir bhujē||
- 2 tīrtva sapta mukhāni yēna samarē sindhōrjjitā Vāhlikū ⁵ Yasyādyāpyadhi vāsyatē jalūmadhir vīryānilaird-Dakṣinā||

¹ This is published from Fleet's Gupta Inscriptions (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, No. 32, III, pp. 139-142) through the kind permission of the Hon'ble Mr. Montague Butler, now His Excellency Sir Montague Butler, as Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Education, etc. The text is an exact copy of Fleet's, the translation is mine.

² No. I, Plate I. Fleet's Gupta Inscriptions.

³ See Whitney's Sanskrit roots, p. 83.

⁴ Bengal referred to in line 1 is a place where the war actually took place. But the phrase immediately before the term indicates the coming together of a certain number of those inimical to Chandra. This implies that a number of those ill-affected to Chandra confederated and attacked his territory from the side of Bengal. The statement is that he won a victory against them by pressing them back.

⁵ The term 'Bāhlikā' used in line 2 has been much misunderstood. The learned scholar, Pandit Haraprasad Sastri and several others that follow him have alike taken it to mean the people living round Balkh. The term has really no reference here to Balkh as such. The Bāhlikas are known as ruling in the Punjab. According to the Mahābhārata, Karnaparva, Chaps. 37-38, Salva, was ruler of this region with his capital Śākala, I think, in the present Ludhiana Dist. The territory is actually defined as being between the Satlej and the Beas in one place and in another as being watered by the Satlej, Ravi and Beas (Satadru, Irāvati and

- 3 Khmurasīva vīrjya gām nṛapatīrg-gām āśṛtasyētarām mūrttyā karm-
nirjitānīm gataṃ atah kīrttya sthitasya kshītau¹||
- 4 Śāntasīva mahābala hutabhiḥ yasya prātāpō mahān nādyapyutsrjati pra-
nāśitī ripōr vātnasya cīhah² kshītau||
- 5 Praptī va svabhuṭirjitam eha suchiram eha ukādhurājjam³ kshītau Chand-
rābhīva⁴ samagrachandra sadrśīm vakra śrīyam bibhratā||
- 6 Tēnīva prānidhāy a bhūmipatinā dhāvēna⁵ Vishnōr (au) matim prāmśur
Vishnū padē girau bhāgavatō Vishnōr dhvaja⁶ sthāpitah||

Viparī) In that well-known episode of the altercation between Śalya and Karna, some curious features of the Bāhlika society came in for unfavourable comment by Karna. In the Udyoga Parva, chapter 49, occurs the statement that Dēvāpi, the son of Pratiṣṭha had a son Bāhlika who was adopted by his maternal uncle. Both Dēvāpi and Bāhlika were set aside, and Śantanu succeeded to the throne, indicating, in all probability, that this Bāhlika was the name to the locality. It was perhaps this connection that was the cause of the trouble when the alliance of Śalya was sought by both the parties. We may presumably therefore look for the Bāhlikas within the frontiers of India without going so far out as Balkh. In considering the provenance of the various Prakrit languages and among them Śūrasēni, three divisions of Śūrasēni find mention (1) Avāntika, Bāhlika and Tākkika (*Ind. Antiq.* LVI, Grierson's Apabramsa Stobakas of Rama Sarman). Avāntika should mean naturally the language of Avanti, the region of Malva, Tākkika belonging to Takla, Hsien Tsang's Telička, Eastern Punjab. Bāhlika therefore would have to be looked for between these two, Śūrasēni itself being in a region on the inner border of this curve, Malva, Rajaputana and the Punjab, close to the borders of the Gangetic Doab. The *Purāṇās* themselves located a dynasty of three Bāhlika rulers in the region of Māhismati on the Narmada. It would therefore be legitimate to look for the Bāhlikas in a portion of India, which would necessitate the crossing of the seven mouths of the Indus in the war against them. The reference to the Bāhlikas in line 2 therefore must be specifically a successful war against the Bāhlikas in the region of Sindh.

¹ The third line has not been properly translated on the whole. What is meant to be said there is that Chandra removed his physical body from the earth but lived in it in fame, and that is what is expressed by his giving up the earth only to go on to another world to live in. While therefore he may be regarded as having left the earth which he conquered, his fame did not leave it, but found a permanent home there.

² The substance of line 4 is that like the great forest fire which, having completely burnt the forest out and subsided, lay covered over with ashes, so also the fire of this ruler's valour, though it might seem extinguished, having completely destroyed the efforts of his enemies, still remains dormant in the recollection of those that had suffered from it, as the forest fire itself.

³ In line 5 occurs clearly the term *ukādhurājjam*. This means 'the sole sovereignty of the earth'. What is stated here is this sole sovereignty was acquired by him, by the effort of his own arms, and by a long continued effort as such, which means that, whoever Chandra was, by a long-continued effort of his, he achieved empire on earth.

⁴ The name Chandra is clearly stated in line 5 to be the name of the individual, Chandra-dhāvēna, by the name Chandra. A confusion has been imported into the verse by bringing in an unnecessary confusion from the simple comparison in this next term between his fire and Chandra, the moon. But the use of the teipta *dhāvēna* leaves no doubt whatsoever that Chandra was the name of the individual.

⁵ The term 'dhāvēna' in line 6 has been the cause of some discussion. Jyotiśingh thought the letter was different from 6 other *dhas* occurring in the inscription, although he read the word *dhāvēna*. The letter, as it is in the period makes no closer approach to *bha* than to *dha*. As *dha*, it merely shugs of the the loop. But the cut is not enough to make it a Gupta *bha*. The *g*asēna I when slight imperfection in the execution of the letter. The next difficulty, an expansion meaning. It means no more than pure, clean, etc., the same was carried on Dhāvanam, meaning 'cleaning'. The word takes the form in he became more accord with the instrumental singular bhūmipatinā, and therefore is to be specially of the masculine instrumental singular. It simply means history of the Vākātakas of the earth.

⁶ The combined expression, Vishnōr dhvaja was only give Pravarasēna

credit for a capital in the region north of the Vindhya, and ascribes to him the celebration of a number of great sacrifices all of which would go to make up the performance of a number of *Aśvamedhas*. What is more specifically to the point, he is given the title *Samudat*, another of the long-recognized titles of emperors like *Adhvaṇya* itself. This extension of Vākātaka territory and influence must have been really at the expense of the Kshatrapas, the main block of whose territory was in Malva with extensions undoubtedly westwards into Gujarat, and south westwards into Konkan. If Pravarasēna extended his territory in the direction of Malva and acquired important possessions there, it must necessarily mean the shrinkage of the territory under Kshatrapas which must bring about as a consequence the abolition of the larger title *Mahākshatrapa* and the retention of the smaller title *Kshatrapa*. If in the course of the decay and destruction practically of the power of the Kshatrapas, Chandragupta played his part, it would be nothing unlikely, but the Vākātaka power itself seems to have passed through a period of storm and stress at the end of Pravarasēna's reign, as according to the Vākātaka inscriptions again, Pravarasēna's grandson Rudrasēna I who succeeded to the throne after him came to a diminished heritage which involved the dropping of the imperial title *Samudat*. In addition to this the inscriptions offer the information that his maternal grandfather a Nāga chieftain rendered yeoman service in the maintenance of the possessions of the dynasty though somewhat diminished in lustre by the dropping of the title *Samudat*. Vākātaka chronology, which very unfortunately has not yet attained to the degree of perfection which history would require, is sufficiently known to make Chandragupta I contemporary with the latter part of the reign of Pravarasēna and perhaps the whole of that of Rudrasēna I. If the expansion of the Vākātaka power under Pravarasēna received a check either at the end of his reign or immediately after, it must have been either from the rising power of Chandragupta I, or of the reviving power of the Kshatrapas. But the Kshatrapa revival had not yet begun and the inference that it was Chandragupta that was responsible for the check becomes almost inevitable. If he succeeded so far, even temporarily, it would be one step further in advance in the progress of Chandragupta to get across the whole of the territory of the Kshatrapas and defeat them and their allies who might be described as Bāhlikas¹ generally by the Hindus. It is also possible that the rise of the Sassanian power in Persia dislodged some of the tribes from the region of Bactria and it is equally possible that a body of them tried to effect a lodgment along with their kinsmen on the frontier of Sindh. It was essential to the position of an imperial aspirant that in the decaying condition of the Kshatrapa power this must be stopped, and a victory against them claimed by Chandragupta I does not at all seem improbable in the political condition of the times. If the Bāhlikas were a people in the eastern Punjab as the *Mahābhārata* reference and the inference that can be drawn from the Bāhlika being a branch of the Śūrasēni Prakrit would give us to understand, then a war against the Bāhlikas would be a natural process in the course of expansion of the rising Gupta power into what was their neighbouring territory of the Kushānas in the Punjab. But the actual

¹ Note Bāhlika a branch of the Śūrasēni Prakrit between Āvanti and Tāluka

reference in the inscription of Chandra to his having crossed the seven mouths of the Indus for a final victory against the Bāhlikas gives us the indication that the war had to be carried on across the whole region occupied by the successors of the Kushānas under the viceroyalty of the Kshatrapas and the Mahākshatrapas of Malva whose territory in the height of their power included all the territory extending westwards from Malva into Saurāshtra, Sauvira and Sindh. The same causes that brought about the subversion of the Kushānas in the north-west must have introduced a great disturbance in the position of the Kshatrapas, and perhaps culminated in the cessation of the title Mahākshatrapa referred to above. That disturbed condition must have been taken advantage of by the rising power of the Guptas on the one side and by the extending power of the Vākātakas on the other.

If Chandragupta's accession to the empire involved, in the course of it, a war against the confederated enemies on the Bengal side and another war or even protracted diplomacy against the Vākātakas who had already risen to importance, and if it involved operations against the Kshatrapas and across the frontier of their territory against their kinsmen from the distant north, his efforts at the establishment of the empire must be described as having been of long duration, and the achievement when it did come is all to the credit of the valour of his arms. It would be not vanity, but would be the normal thanksgiving of a devoted mind, if he built a temple to his tutelary god Viṣṇu, or merely planted a flag-staff to an already existing temple of Vāsudēva bearing upon it a record of his deeds. In a moment of fervour like that he would naturally describe himself not in all the paraphernalia of empire, but with the mere name, such as the ordinary Brahman now-a-days has to describe himself when he performs his prostrations of salutation to an elderly man or other object of holy veneration. As the inscription contains a clear statement in regard to his death, the inscription is regarded as a posthumous one. It is not absolutely necessary however that it should be so. It is possible to imagine that he meant the record to be put up on the pillar when he should have died and not while he was alive. In that sense it would be merely analogous to the sloka in the *Mṛichchakatikā* where a similar statement occurs, and which on that account is regarded as a posthumous addition by somebody else. It is not impossible to believe that people that could make wills and dispositions of their properties after death, could make similar arrangements, if they considered these of sufficient importance, for the putting up of a record of their own achievements in their own way. Hence this inscription is posthumous in the sense that it was inscribed after his death, but it is not necessary that the inscription was necessarily written after. Even if it was it would be nothing inappropriate with a successor like Samudragupta coming to the throne after him.

The matter, however, has been a great deal discussed by other scholars and their position must be examined as to how far they materially bear against this position.

The late Dr Fleet who published the inscription in his volume of the Gupta inscriptions, the *Corpus Inscriptionem Indicarum*, in discussing the palæographical character of the record expressed the opinion, somewhat hesitatingly though, that the Chandra of this record may be

Chandragupta I The discovery of a record of a Chandravarman inscribed on the face of a rock, called Śisunia rock near Raniganj, started a new discussion as to the actual identity of this Chandravarman and in the course of this discussion two opinions had been put forward, prominently One of these identifies Chandra of the Meharauli inscriptions with Chandragupta II and the other is that the Chandra of the Meharauli inscription is no other than Chandravarman of the Śisunia record Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Haraprasad Sastri sponsored the second opinion, identifying Chandra of the Meharauli inscription with Chandravarman of the Śisunia rock The late Dr Vincent Smith held the opinion that Chandra of the Meharauli inscription must be Chandragupta II The Mahamahopadhyaya has since published the Śisunia record of Chandravarman and another inscription of a Naravarman, both of them rulers of Pushkarana, in the *Epigraphia Indica* and it is these that form the basis of his conclusion¹ Vincent Smith's disquisition was contributed to the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*² to which reference has already been made More recently Mr Radha Govinda Basak made an attempt in the columns of the *Indian Antiquary* to revert to the old opinion of Dr Fleet, and identify Chandra of Meharauli with Chandragupta I This evoked a reply, which is unnecessarily polemic in character, from Mr R D Bannerji and published in the *Epigraphia Indica*³ The Mahamahopadhyaya's publication of the inscriptions of the rulers of Pushkarana gives us the following information The inscription on the Śisunia rock first published in the *Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society* by Babu Nagendranath Basu, is an inscription which tells us no more than that the chief among the devoted servants of Chakrasvāmi (Viṣṇu), who was ruler of Pushkarana and the son of Mahārāja Śrī Simhavarman who calls himself Mahārāja Śrī Chandravarman set up the record It is obviously a Vaiṣṇava inscription and except indicating the devotion of the ruler of distant Pushkarana by name Chandravarman, it tells us absolutely nothing more, but the Gangadhar record of a Naravarman of Pushkarana, the second record published by the Pandit, describes Naravarman who was, in all probability a Vaiṣṇava also, as a powerful and valiant ruler of Pushkarana, son of a Simhavarman and grandson of Jayavarman In his reign a grant was made The inscription does not record any suzerain of this Naravarman He is described only as a Mahārāja It gives a date which is equivalent to A D 404 and this places him in the reign of Chandragupta II On the strength of the identity of name of the father of this Naravarman and of Chandravarman of the Śisunia record and of the fact that both are described as rulers of Pushkarana, the Mahamahopadhyaya made Chandravarman and Naravarman brothers This may be accepted without demur Two other records were published by the late Dr Fleet himself, the Gangadhar record of a Viśvavarman, son of this Naravarman, and the Mandasor pillar inscription of Kumāragupta where Viśvavarman's son Bandhuvarman is described as Kumāragupta's feudatory The Gangadhar record is dated A D 426 which must be allotted to the reign of Kumāragupta He is not there described as a feudatory Though his name is mentioned in the Mandasor inscription of A D 436 and though it is possible to take, from the reference there to Viśvavarman,

¹ Vols XIII 133 and XII 315 ff ² Vol for 1897, pp 1-18 ³ Vol xiv, pp 368-71

that he might have been a feudatory of Kumaragupta he is taken to be not a feudatory on the strength of the Gangadhar record. Even this point may be conceded, but so far, none of these records of the rulers of Pushkarana gives us any clue whatsoever to identify the Chandravarman of the Śisunia rock inscription with Chandra of the Meharauli inscription. The position is somewhat further complicated by the mention of a ruler Chandravarman among the rulers of Āryāvartta uprooted by Samudragupta in the Allahabad pillar inscription. It is just possible he is the same as Chandravarman of the Śisunia record, and it may even be allowed that this uprooting of Chandravarman by Samudragupta caused the retirement of this family of rulers to the somewhat more remote and sequestered portion of Rajaputana, round Pushkarana, their original home. Even after making all this allowance which seems admissible, it does not take us very far towards helping us to identify Chandravarman of this record with Chandra of the Meharauli pillar inscription. Chandra describes himself only as a Mūhārāja and gives us no hint even in his remote Bengal inscription that he either aspired or attained to Adhirāja. In the Śisunia record which must be regarded as much of an inscription of devotion to Viṣṇu as that of the Meharauli pillar, he has taken care to give himself the full name Chandravarman and give the name of his father, whereas in the Meharauli pillar the name given as Chandra is of an entirely different character. The relative position of Pushkarana, Delhi and Muttra and of the Śisunia rock is in the form of a somewhat large triangle with Delhi at its apex, the Śisunia rock and Pushkarana forming the two ends of the rather long base. There is no need however for a Pushkarana ruler if he extended his territory to the frontiers of Bengal, the extension should necessarily include within it Delhi or the region near it. It seems therefore impossible to accept that these records give us any lead as to the identification of Chandra of the Meharauli inscription with Chandravarman excepting that Chandravarman of the Śisunia rock is the Chandravarman, ruler of Pushkarana, and taking it along with the fact that Samudragupta found it necessary to uproot a Chandravarman among the rulers of Āryāvartta, the conditions necessary seem to be satisfied if we assume that Chandravarman of Pushkarana was an aggressive ruler, who attempted to take advantage, with some success, of the accession of Samudragupta to the throne and carried on an incursion into his territory of which there is some indication in the Harisena inscription, though mutilated. We could understand his putting up the Śisunia inscription as a result of this temporary success. If Samudragupta turned round upon him as soon as he returned from his southern expedition not for the purpose of turning him back, but to put him altogether beyond power of mischief, which is what seems implied in the statement in the Harisena inscription regarding the monarchs of Āryāvartta, we should have gone quite as far as the matter contained in these records could take us. There seems therefore little positive ground for assuming that Chandravarman of the dynasty of Pushkarana is at all the individual referred to as Chandra in the Meharauli pillar inscription.

This identification having nothing to support it, the only other possibility is whether the Chandra of the Meharauli pillar is Chandragupta II. The whole set of arguments adduced in favour of this identification resolve themselves into a mere repetition of a number

of assumptions regarding Chandragupta I and the foundation of the Gupta dynasty, for none of this is there any positive irrefutable evidence. The assumption of the shortness of the reign of Chandragupta I rests upon other assumptions that he issued no coins of his own, that there are no inscriptions of his forthcoming, that he did nothing except to marry a wife, and even that he did not call himself Adhirāja and that it was his successors that did so. What is more surprising is the statement in Mr Bannerji's note that Chandragupta's name is not mentioned in any inscription before that of his grandson dated 92 G E. The Harisena inscription does contain a genealogy beginning with Mahārāja Śrī Gupta, his son Ghaṭotkacha, who is also described only as a Mahārāja and it comes down to Chandragupta I, who is described Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Chandragupta. That responsible sovereign under whose authority the inscription was issued should have taken a mere fancy to give his father a higher title and should stop short in that fancy with the name of his grandfather, is something which may be rather difficult to understand without some reason to support the ascription of the title to Chandragupta and not giving it to his father. In fairness both to Samudragupta, the approving authority, and to Harisena the writer of the document, we ought to hold that both of them believed there was some reason which justified the giving of the title Mahārājādhirāja to Chandragupta and that justification or the validity did not hold in their estimation for extending that title to his father. If so Chandragupta I must have been a man of far greater achievements than modern scholars have so far been inclined to ascribe to him¹. In regard to Chandragupta II we have some inscriptions and other sources of information such as coins and even information from literary sources. So far, the only positive achievement ascribed to him is the destruction of the power of the Kshatrapas in Gujarat, possibly Western Malva. After the achievement of Chandragupta as recorded in the Harisena inscription nothing more seems to be called for to round off the empire, and Chandragupta had done that. About the time that Chandragupta must have been active on this side of his empire Shahpur II must have been on the Sassanian throne of Persia and he was active both on the north-western and eastern frontier of Persia which must have kept people on that frontier preparing themselves to meet the aggressive expansion of his power. The period of Chandragupta I's rule on the contrary, and perhaps the generation preceding him, were periods peculiarly of unrest among the tribes and people in the region extending southwards from the Hindukush to the sea. The activity of the first rulers of Sassanid Persia combined with the advance of the Huns in the doab between the Oxus and the Jaxartes must have had the combined effect of dislodging some of the peoples in occupation of their territories and must have brought about that movement of the Bāhlikas which the Chandra of the Meharauli pillar could check by a battle on the frontiers of Sindh which he fought after crossing the seven mouths of the Indus. The positive indication therefore seems to be in favour of identifying Chandra of the Meharauli pillar with Chandragupta I rather than Chandragupta II.

¹ This is supported by the statement in the record about his anxiety in regard to success.

IV

FOUNDERS OF THE EMPIRE CHANDRAGUPTA I AND
SAMUDRAGUPTA

From this investigation it becomes clear that Chandragupta I began his life as ruler of his ancestral dominions along the banks of the Ganges, just like his father and grandfather before him. He acquired both prestige and influence, and what is more, a very desirable addition to his territory, by the Lichchavi marriage. This new addition rounded off his frontier and brought him into touch with Bengal on the one side, and the petty states of Central India and the Punjab, on the other. At about the same time the Vākātakas must have been occupying the dominant position in the plateau region lying across the Vindhya mountains, extending to a considerable distance on either side. The long reign of Pravarasēna I must either have come to an end, or was drawing to a close, and Pravarasēna's claim to the position of *Samrat* must have had the effect of stimulating the ambition of Chandragupta I, leading him on to make an effort at an imperial position for himself. The question would have to be settled either by diplomacy, or by war. We have no hint on either side of a war between the two powers, but the Vākātaka inscriptions of the later members of the dynasty drop out the *Samrat* after Pravarasēna I in describing the other members of the dynasty. It seems therefore clear that Chandragupta I managed to get rid of the only possible rivalry in his effort, and gaining for himself the position of an imperial ruler.

The most powerful of the contemporary states having thus been put out of his way of ambition, Chandragupta I must have carried on some wars against his less powerful neighbours with a view to justify the assumption by him of the title 'Mahārājādhirāja', in regard to which it must be remembered, contemporary inscriptions make a clear distinction. The Vākātaka inscriptions as a whole never mix up the Mahārājādhirāja with the somewhat inferior title 'Mahārāja', and they make the distinction quite clear by applying the higher title in the grants of Pravarasēna II to the contemporary Gupta ruler, and giving themselves only the lower title. Hence the assumption of a title like Mahārājādhirāja by Chandragupta could not have been at the time without signifying his accession to the higher position, and such an accession could not have been brought about except by actual war, or by the threat of it, against his immediate neighbours such as they were. It is likely that he carried on a war against some petty powers on the Bengal frontier, but his principal achievements must have been against his neighbours on the west and north-west. If he got the minor powers to acknowledge his overlordship, this extension of his influence would naturally bring him into contact with the successors of the Kushānas in the Punjab. This state of things is what is inferable from the Meharauli inscription, and the achievement claimed therein against the Bāhlikas would take him as far as the region of Sindh and Surāshtra as the *Purānas* do mention three Bāhlikas ruling for thirty years somewhere in that region, to be more precise, South-western Rajputana. This achievement need not be held to mean the destruction of the Śaka power, or

anything so drastic as that, but may be held to mean the defeat of the rulers of that locality and a treaty following thereon. The specific mention of three Bāhlikas in the *Purāṇas*, and the reference to the name as Bāhlikas in the inscriptions may justify our going a little further and stating that it was only this division of the foreigners that were actually defeated, without taking Chandragupta as far out as Bactria¹. All these doings might have involved a considerable length of time, and Chandragupta's reign need not be held to be a very short one. A reign of thirty years may perhaps be a justifiable estimate, and his rule therefore would have extended from, say, A.D. 310 to 340. This position ascribed to Chandragupta will become clear when we consider the campaigns of Samudragupta and the various powers involved in his wars.

Samudragupta came to the throne therefore, under the most favourable auspices for putting the empire of his father's foundation on a permanent footing not as a mere conventional form, but in real earnest. Great as were his character and accomplishments on the one side, and his actual achievements on the other, we are yet driven to the one fairly well-preserved inscription of his as the solitary source of information for all that he achieved. Even that single source has not been preserved to us in its complete form. There is enough of it however that has come down to us to know his achievements in some detail. The Allahabad pillar inscription of which the first part is badly gone has enough left of the first eight verses which describe his early education and preparation for the exalted position, to know something of his character and accomplishments as a young man. The first two *ślokas* are completely gone, and we could hardly guess what they actually did contain. The third has enough left to give us an idea that he was in the field of letters an accomplished scholar, and enjoyed as such a considerable reputation among men of learning. Then follows the fourth *śloka* which is intact. It states categorically that Chandragupta, his hair standing on end with pleasure, embraced this noble son while the whole of the assembled court breathed easy (in approval), and those of equal birth witnessed with faces saddened by disappointment. Then scanning him round and round with affection, with eyes that would get to the truth and filled with tears the father told him 'May you protect this whole earth for long'. We have thus the clearest indication that he was the son chosen for his worth as successor to the empire. This naturally would have created jealousies against him in some quarters, and possibly even admiration in others, and that seems what is indicated in the *śloka* following.

Śloka 7 then follows and refers to the overthrow at the town of Puṣpa (Pāṭalipura), of two enemies Achyuta and Nāgasēna, and of the capturing of a descendant of Kōṭa-Kula. This seems to imply a war possibly involving an attack on Pāṭalipura itself. Samudragupta overthrew the enemies, destroying two of them and capturing the third. The 8th *śloka* describes him as forming 'the pale of Dharma, possessed of fame white as the rays of the moon, wisdom that pierced to the inward nature of things, and of calmness, following the path of the sacred hymns worthy of study, and capable of writing works which give powerful expression to what is contained in the minds of poets

¹ It is open to doubt whether the Bāhlikas could be associated with Balkh at all

These virtues were his. Is there any virtue, wise people consider worthy of possession, that is not in him?' So far about his accomplishments as a literary man, and only one warlike achievement to his credit, that of overthrowing the enemies that attacked him in his capital. The next passage describes his prowess as a warrior, and indicates his achievements by the shining marks of the wounds that he received in a hundred battles by various weapons of war then in legitimate use.

The next prose passage enumerates categorically the 12 kingdoms invaded by Samudragupta and mentions their kings by name who were captured by him and released, in the region of the Dakṣiṇāpatha, India south of the Nerbada and Māhishmati.

These are —

1	Mahēndra	of	Kosala
2	Vyāghrarāja	,,	Mahākāntāra
3	Maṇṭarāja	,,	Kaurālaka
4	Mahēndra or Mahēndragiri	,,	Piśhṭāpura
5	Svāmīdatta	,,	Koṭṭūr
6	Damana	,,	Erāṇḍapallī
7	Vishnugopa	,,	Kanchī
8	Nīlarāja	,,	Avamukta
9	Hastivarman	,,	Vengi
10	Ugrasēna	,,	Pālaka
11	Kubhera	,,	Daivarāstra
12	Dhananājaya	,,	Kusthalāpura

and others

Then follow the kings of Āryyāvartta, namely —

- 1 Rudradēva
- 2 Matila
- 3 Nāgadatta
- 4 Chandravarma
- 5 Ganapatīnāga
- 6 Nāgasēna
- 7 Achyuta
- 8 Nandī
- 9 Balavarman and others

He is said further to have reduced to his service, all the forest kings and put under tribute and obedience to his commands, the following border kingdoms —

- 1 Samataṭa
- 2 Davaka
- 3 Kāmarūpa
- 4 Nēpāla
- 5 Karttupura

He is said similarly to have put under tribute —

- 1 The Mālava
- 2 Ārjunāyana
- 3 Yaudhēya

- 4 Mādraka
- 5 Abhira
- 6 Prārjuna
- 7 Sanakānika
- 8 Kāka
- 9 Karaparika and other tribal states

His fame as restorer of many kings who had either lost their kingdoms, or been put out of possession, had spread over the whole earth. Distant monarchs like these —

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 Daivaputra | 4 Śaka |
| 2 Shāhi | 5 Murunḍa |
| 3 Shāhānu Shāhi | 6 Sīmhala |

brought for his acceptance tributes of various kinds, and obtained his orders for the enjoyment of their territory in royal writs bearing the *garuda* seal, thus indicating their service to him and spreading the greatness of his valour to the limits of the earth. His mind had deliberately taken upon itself the uplift of the poor, the humble, the helpless and the needy. His anger was kindled only in war, but he came into the world for its benefit, incorporating in himself the powers of Kubhēra, Varuna, Indra and Yama. His officials were constantly everywhere restoring to the defeated monarchs, their kingdoms which had been taken away from them by his own deeds of war. His mind was acute and had received excellent training. His accomplishments as a poet and musician were great, and in both these departments he put to shame Brhaspati, and Tumburu and Nārada respectively. He had established his title as a '*lavinaja*' by writing many works which would have proved the means of subsistence for learned men. He was human only to the extent of putting the affairs of the earth in order, but otherwise a celestial being who had made the world his temporary home. Such was the great grandson of *Mahārāja Śrī Gupta*, the grandson of *Mahārāja Śrī Ghaṭotkacha*, the son of *Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Chandragupta*. He was also the daughter's son of the *rāja* of the *Lichchavis*, and was born of *Mahādēvi-Kumāradēvi*. This was *Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Samudragupta*. He planted this pillar as if it were the arm of the earth in order that the fame of his conquest of the whole earth and of the great prosperity that, in consequence, became his, might be proclaimed to heaven itself, whose fame grown in quantity by his valour, by his virtue and by his learning spreads through the three worlds in all directions, making them holy as if it were the white purifying water of the *Ganges*, first imprisoned in and then released from the matted locks

from among a number of sons probably, and this choice created both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This does not appear to have created trouble adequately effective to prevent his accession to the throne. The achievement of Samudragupta against Achyuta, Nāgasēna and the ruler of the Koṭa family in Pushpapura may have been an attack by these monarchs in combination against the capital Patna. Samudragupta achieved distinction in war by playfully defeating and turning them out from the capital. This has apparently reference to an achievement by the prince soon after his nomination by the father, whether it be actually after his accession or no. Achyuta has been identified with a ruler of Allichhatra as a few of coins on Achyuta in this region are extant. Of the other two Nāgasēna and the rāja of Koṭa we have no information that would lead to any identification. That seems to be the only war that Samudragupta had to undertake near home. The rest of his campaigns seem to be cast in the epic form of a *digvijaya*. The direction which called for his attention first was the south and the eleven kingdoms and their rulers mentioned are all of them capable of location along the east coast — Kosala and Mahākāntāra are both of them regions in the Vindhya in the eastern half of the peninsula. Piṣṭāpura is what is now known as Piṭṭapuram, which was long the headquarters of one of the petty Chālukya kingdoms in the centuries following. Koṭṭūr or Koṭṭūra may be one of several places of the name in the same region without going so far out as Coimbatore to find a place answering to the name. Ērāṇḍapallī has recently been identified with Elamancnili-Kalīnganagara in the Vizagapatam district. Kāñchī is the well-known place in the south and the capital of the Pallavas. Avamuktaka has not so far been satisfactorily identified. Vengī mentioned is the Peddavēgī in the Ellore taluk, capital of the Eastern Chālukyas, and the king Hastivarman of this place may have been the Sālankāyāna chieftain. Pālaka is another place in the same region which figures oftentimes as one of the alternative capitals of the Pallavas. Daivarāṣṭra has also been identified with Kalīnganagara in the Ganjam district. Kusthalāpura also must be a place in that region although the exact identification of the place has not yet been reached.¹ In respect of Kaurālaka, the word from which it is derived would stand Kuraḷa. This had been modified into Karalaka² and Kerala respectively by Dr. Fleet, and has been fruitful of a considerable amount of misconception in regard to the place itself and the extent and character of the invasion referred to. It has nothing whatever to do with *Kerala*, and it will not be surprising if the Kurālaka of the inscription finds its modern equivalent in Kurlah, the Railway junction. The southern limit of Samudragupta's invasion is undoubtedly Kāñchī, and the invasion seems to have been undertaken along the east coast coming probably by the interior road and doubling back along the coast road. There is no need to be unduly sceptical about an actual invasion which could have meant no more than the demand for submission and acknowledgment of the title to *adhirājya* of Samudragupta. The region in the interior

¹ There is a river Kuśasthalī south of the Krishna mentioned in the *Kalīngattu-parani* poem.

² Here is a tribe of people *kaurālaka* mentioned among those of the southern region in the Brhat Samhita of Varāhamihira (ch. xiv 11-16). Fleet *Indian Antiquary*, xvii, 171.

of the Dakhan must have been, as was pointed out already, in the possession of the Vākātakas, at least the greater part of it, and the omission of any place in that region in this southern list is clear indication of the existence of an alliance between the Guptas and the Vākātakas indicated before. If these somewhat petty rulers of the Dakṣiṇāpatha acknowledged his authority without a fight, or submitted after showing fight, in either case, the expression that he captured them and set them free again could be justified as a poetical expression. So then, the region of the south, not exactly in the occupation of the Vākātakas, had been brought under subjection by this southern expedition.

The next list has reference to the rulers of Āryyāvarṭta of whom as many as nine are named. Among the nine no more than two or three are capable of any kind of identification in our present state of knowledge of the political geography of this region, but it must be noted however that the term Āryyāvarṭta here is not to be taken in the wider sense of the term, and would correspond merely to what the Buddhists called the middle kingdom answering to the region of the Doab with a considerable margin on the western side of the Jumna and taking within it a considerable block of territory in what is now Central India in the south and the Punjab in the north. As the *Purāṇas* have reference to Nāga rulers in Padmāvati (Padam Pāvāya, twenty-five miles north-east of Narwar) and Muttra, Nāgadatta and Gaṇapatīnāga may be regarded as rulers on this particular frontier. The Chandravarman that is referred to here may be the Chandravarman of Pushkarana who claims a victory as far east as the frontiers of east Bengal, and who was probably the author of the Śuśūṇia inscription. Nāgasēna and Achyuta may be the same rulers already referred to as taking part in the attack on Pāṭalipura. Thus several of these, if not all, were kings of the western frontier, rather an extended frontier, than what could have been the actual western frontier of the ancestral kingdom of the Guptas. The actual conquest of these brought him the submission of the forest tribes of Mahākāntāra without a fight. If the Vyāgra of the Nachnē-kī-Talāi can be taken to be the Vyāghrarāja of Mahākāntara, the great forest country would have lain in the region extending from Bundelkhand south-westwards.

The third list has reference to the border kingdoms completely. The first three among them, Samatāṭa, Davāka and Kāmarūpa, are the three kingdoms on the eastern frontier from the Bay of Bengal to the Himalayas in order, and then follow the two sub-Himalayan states of Nepal and Karttipura. That settles the eastern and northern frontiers of his dominions. Along the outer frontier of the west and south-west were the various tribes, and nine such are given in the list next following. The Mālavas are the well-known tribes inhabiting the region of Malwa, perhaps more west than east. Ārjunāyana, Yaudhēya and Madraka must have been tribes occupying the territory extending northwards of the territory of the Mālavas and occupying the eastern part of what is now the Punjab. The Yaudhēyas are actually located in the region of Biyāna, not far from Muttra. The Ābhira, Prāryuna and Sanakānika, seem to have been tribes in the western part of the Vindhyan region and to the northward of it. Kāka and Karaparika are not known from other sources to lead to a location. Then come a

list of kings farther west and south, who are described as distant monarchs. Among these are mentioned Daivaputra one of the titles assumed by the later Kushāns, the Shāhi, perhaps a Kushān kingdom in the region of Kabul, Shāhanu-Shāhi, the chief of imperial Kushān kingdom in Bactria. Then follow the Sakas in the region of Sindh and farther east, and Murunda generally taken to be a tribe of the Hunas or the Parthians, and last of all follows Simhala or Ceylon, as if to indicate that between Kāuchī of Vishnugopa and distant Ceylon no kingdom had been heard of by name by the great Gupta monarch or his court. This list of the states in different stages of political connection with the rising empire of the Guptas gives us a fairly clear indication of the extent of the Gupta empire at the time. It included the ancestral territory of the Guptas that is the provinces of Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the whole of the Madras Presidency as far south as Kāncī, and the greater half of Central India on the eastern side, and a considerable portion of Rajputana extending to the frontiers of Bhawalpur, the northern frontier perhaps continuing along the banks of the Jhelum and Chenab to the frontier of Kashmir. The part that is omitted in Hindustan is clear. On the east are the independent three kingdoms, on the north are Nepal and others and on the west are the Kushāna and the connected kingdoms extending towards Bactria. The portion omitted in the Central region of Hindustan, particularly the plateau portion and the whole of the Dakhan extending southwards to the end of the plateau is significant. No part of this vast region seems to be included in any of the five lists given separately as kingdoms reduced to subordination, or put under tributary alliance, or in any other way brought into political relationship with Samudragupta. If Samudragupta did do anything with them, by way of bringing about a political relationship of whatever kind it may be, the chances are, he would surely have had it mentioned in this inscription. The fact of the omission is very significant. The whole of this region more or less seems to have been under the Vākātakas, and if their position as an independent power, though in subordinate alliance, had been recognized by his father as was suggested before, we can understand the omission of any reference to them in Samudragupta's inscription. The Vākātakas, as was pointed out already, were apparently the dynasty of Vidyāśakti of the *Purānas*, who held their authority originally in the territory composed of a part of Central India and Berar, and therefrom extended both northwards and southwards to take in at one time all the territory extending from Bundelkhand in the north to the Southern Mahratta country in the south. That would mean practically the whole of the plateau region of Dakhan and Central India, leaving the coast strips on either side and perhaps even the adjacent march of territory in the occupation of other kingdoms. The only chronological datum available so far is the marriage of Chandragupta II's daughter Prabhāvatī with Rudrasēna II, Vākātaka. That would make Rudrasēna II a somewhat younger contemporary of Chandragupta II. The late Dr Vincent Smith attempts to fix a precise date for this alliance, and takes it to be somewhere about A.D. 390 when he must have effected the conquest of the western Śakas or Kshatrapas. This is hardly necessary from the position, and seems to have little justification in the relative position of the powers. Rudrasēna's immediate predecessor, his father,

was Prithvisēna I, and according to the few details that the Ajanta cave inscription gives us regarding him, he was by far the most powerful member of the dynasty who succeeded to a well-compacted kingdom and ruled over it for a long time. It is in his reign, according to this same inscription, and others ascribable to him, that the Vākāṭaka territory must have reached the greatest extent. The Ajanta inscription referred to above gives him credit for the conquest of Kuntala, almost the most southerly region of his extended territory, and his own inscriptions are found in the northern part of Bundelkhand, not very far from Allahabad, where a feudatory of his by name Vyāghra had cut out, on the face of the living rock, inscriptions making a gift for the spiritual benefit of his parents. This Prithvisēna must have been the contemporary of Samudragupta, and the omission of any reference to him in the Samudragupta inscription is accounted for as being due to an alliance already entered into with his father Rudrasēna I, or much less possibly, even with himself. In any case the possessions of the Vākāṭakas in the central block of territory extending from Bundelkhand to Mysore is undoubtedly the reason that Samudragupta's invasions went down as far south as Kānchī and turned back almost along the same road in what is obviously intended for a progress in the style of a *digvijaya*. Prithvisēna therefore would have been a contemporary of Samudragupta, and his son Chandragupta, and it is just possible that Prithvisēna's reign was just contemporary with the last years of that even of Chandragupta I. That Chandragupta II entered into a marriage alliance with the Vākāṭakas must have been the result of the high position occupied by the Vākāṭakas as an almost equal power, and must have been the direct outcome of the previous political relationship of the two powers as allies. The probabilities are that Chandragupta II secured this alliance before he undertook his invasion against the Kshatrapas of the west.

In regard to the relationship of Samudragupta with Ceylon we have some unlooked for light from Chinese sources. We are indebted to Prof. Sylvain Levi for making this available to us. The king Mēghavarṇa of Ceylon, the immediate successor of Mahāsēna ascended the throne according to the Ceylonese chronicle in A D 808 or A D 325 on the basis of 483 B C for the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha, and is said to have ruled till A D 352. In his reign a couple of Buddhist monks, the senior of the two happening to be his own brother, went on a pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya, and were put to a considerable amount of inconvenience during their stay there as there was no arrangement by which they could find the means for a comfortable existence in the locality which must have been as sequestered a place then as now. On their return home they made a representation to the king that such a holy place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists should be so unprovided with convenience for Ceylonese visitors. The king then sent a mission with presents to Samudragupta and obtained his permission to build a *Vihāra* and a rest-house, chiefly with a view to meet the convenience of the Ceylonese travellers, on the northern side of where the Bodhi-tree is, and that is believed to be a building that stands yet notwithstanding a certain number of occasions in which it had undergone destruction and renovation. Whether Samudragupta had any other communication with the Ceylon monarch we do not know. This is

enough to indicate the establishment of a relationship of international courtesy between the two states. This mission from Ceylon must have taken place after A D 352, if the Ceylonese chronology is to be accepted. We shall probably have to accept it as it is almost a contemporary statement of the Ceylonese Buddhist records (and it is not impossible that there were periods in Ceylonese history when the date of the Nirvāṇa was taken to be not 544-3 B C). If this mission had been undertaken by the Ceylonese monarch as the result of the great reputation of Samudragupta as his Harisena inscription makes us believe, then he must have made all his conquests so called before that date. There is nothing impossible in this assumption as, in fact, the formidable list of conquests on the face of it could not have involved any very large amount of fighting. The conquests seem to have been of the nature of a progress demanding tokens of submission with the set object of celebrating a *Rājashūya* or an *Aśvamēdha*. We are in fact told that Samudragupta did celebrate the *Aśvamēdha*, and had signalized the event by the issue of an *Aśvamēdha* type of coins. If Chandragupta I had brought his immediate neighbours into subjection to himself by war, what Samudragupta had to do was merely to follow up his father's performance and establish his claims to the empire by demanding and obtaining the formal submission of the surrounding kings and governments which had already either been brought under subjection, or signified their acknowledgment of subordination. So, therefore the whole scheme is one of progress with a view to the celebration of the *Aśvamēdha* which must have been celebrated sometime between A D 350 and A D 360.

Samudragupta was a sovereign of great parts and varied accomplishments, and seems to have had a remarkable turn of mind for literature and fine arts. Apart from the statement in the Harisēna inscription that, in point of intellectual acumen, he put Brihaspati, the guru of the Dēvas to shame, and in music, Tamburu and Nārada, the divine founders of the art, the very legends on his coins indicate his unmistakable partiality for literature. Not taking into consideration the marriage type of coins which we have ascribed to Chandragupta I, there are seven types ascribed to him without a doubt, of which one belongs to Kācha. (1) Whether Kācha is another name of Samudragupta, or whether it was the name of an elder brother who succeeded to the throne immediately after the death of Chandragupta I, is matter on which there is yet no unanimity of opinion. In the face of the specific statement in the inscription of Harisēna that Samudragupta was the chosen of his father as successor, it seems unlikely on the face of it that another son should have set up as his father's successor, and brought on a civil war, of which apparently there is absolutely no hint given in the inscription itself. It is quite probable that Kācha was only another name of Samudragupta, it may merely be an abbreviated part of the name of Ghaṭotkacha, the grandfather. (2) There is one other specimen of Samudragupta's coins, the so-called tiger type. The obverse legend on it is 'Vyāghraparākrama' (having the valour of the tiger), and the reverse legend is merely 'Rāja Samudragupta'. If it could not be regarded as an issue of Samudragupta while yet he was a prince, it must have been his earliest issue. Even so, it would be difficult to explain the simple title *Rāja*. The other five types all of them give invariably his name on the obverse followed by a verse or

prose piece, the most striking word from it being chosen for the reverse title (3) On the standard type we have the obverse legend *Samaya-sata vilata-vijayo jitārīparājito divam jayati* (the victor of a hundred wars, unknown to defeat by his enemies, wins heaven) The reverse legend is simply *Parākrama* which might be regarded as synonymous with the longer legend on the obverse (4) On the archer type is the legend *apīrathiratho vijitya kṣitim sucharitāṣṭi divam jayati* (the unmatched charioteer, having conquered the earth, wins heaven by good deeds) This takes on the reverse legend *apīrathirathah*, the first word of the obverse legend (5) In the battle-axe type, the obverse legend given is *Kīlānta-parasur-jayati-aṣṭarājā-jetā-jitah* (the battle-axe of death, the conqueror of unconquered kings, unconquered of them, conqueror) The reverse legend is the first word *Kīlānta-parasu* On the so-called Kācha coin there is a similar legend, and that is what casts a doubt upon the propriety of ascribing it to a different person The obverse legend is *Kācho gām avajitya divam-karmabhir-uttamair jayati* (Kācha having acquired the world, wins heaven by excellent deeds) The reverse legend is *Sarvaśālocchettā* (the unrooter of all kings) which might be held to be synonymous with the obverse legend (6) In the so-called lyfist type there is the simple obverse legend *Mahārājadhīrāja Śrī Samudragupta* On the reverse is the equally simple *Samudragupta* (7) On the *Aśvamēdha* type is the obverse legend *Rājādhirājah-prithvīm-avajitya-divam-jayati apratīvārya-vīryah* The corresponding reverse legend is *Aśvamēdhaparakrama* Most of these obverse legends could be picked up in the Harisena inscription itself, or in those of his successors who most of them seem to have copied the expressions used in this document, and which may be in others that have not come down to us

As a result of this detailed study, the position of Samudragupta stands out thus He ascended the throne of his father by the choice of the latter, and the territory to which he thus became ruler consisted, to begin with, of the compact block constituting the provinces of Bihar and the United Provinces of the present day, almost completely The Jumna might be regarded as a boundary on the west as far down as Allahabad, and an indefinite line proceeding southwards therefrom On the eastern side of the river Ganges and its tributaries of the delta mark the boundary, and this river boundary is to be continued more or less in a straight line northwards from the bend of the river to the frontiers of Sikkim Samudragupta's achievement actually amounts to this He began by beating off such enemies as attempted a dismemberment of the infant empire, and proceeded to secure the territory along the doubtful frontier of the southwest and the west The condition of affairs on this frontier was such that the only way of asserting his overlordship was by uprooting the petty rulers of the various kingdoms, and reducing them to complete vassalage or by a complete annexation of their territory He seems actually to have adopted both methods in respect of these states As an indirect consequence of this he brought the forest kingdoms and the tribes ruling in them to complete subordination as well These two conquests actually extended his frontier on this side to take in practically the whole of eastern Malva, and bring him into touch with the Kshatrapas ruling over the provinces of Konkan, Surāshṭra and perhaps even western Malva That would involve the absorption of the territories

dependent upon Vidisa, and the extension of the frontier right down to Māhishmatī (or Māndhātā). As a consequence of this extension, the Vākāṭakas must have been pushed back from Central India and confined to territory south of the Vindhya mountains. He seems to have managed this without actually going to war, thereby continuing perhaps the policy of his father in regard to this contemporary dynasty of powerful rulers. This would satisfactorily explain the recognition of the Vākāṭaka Prithvisēna's overlordship by the Vyāghraṛāja of the Nālinē-ke-Talā and other epigraphs in northern Bundelkhand. This settles the relation between the two powerful states and leaves only the outer margin of the coast on the eastern and on the western side of the Peninsula for Samudragupta to bring under his influence. His southern campaign had that object in view and no more. He undertook no campaign along the west coast as there was hardly any need for him to do so. Prithvisēna I, the Vākāṭaka contemporary of Samudragupta was a great monarch who extended his territory as far south as Kuntala, and in the process of this expansion must have been responsible for the reduction of the power of the Kshatrapas, so that the Konkan portion of the Kshatrapa territory had been, in all probability, annexed to the territory of the Vākāṭakas themselves. The Kshatrapas therefore remained confined to their corner in Surāshtra, perhaps stretching out to retain their hold on south-western Malva. The eastern and northern frontiers are clearly defined and the natural boundaries are taken advantage of to get into diplomatic relations with the states beyond them. Along the north-west he does not appear to have done anything warlike, but was content with bringing them into diplomatic relations of acceptance, more or less, of this overlordship. This done, he could celebrate his Asvamedha in the acceptable orthodox style.

One event of some importance recorded in distant Ceylonese history seems to make the southern invasion of Samudragupta a real historical event. It was already pointed out that the Ceylonese contemporary of Samudragupta was Śrī Mēghavarṇna who ascended the throne in A.D. 352 and ruled for twenty-eight years. In the ninth year of his reign it is recorded in the Mahāvamsa, a Kalinga princess by name Hēmanālā had to fly from her country and her father's capital Dantapura, with the tooth relic of the Buddha in her possession for the safety of the latter. The occasion for this flight is said to have been the invasion of the Yavana Rakta-Bāhu.¹ She landed in the region called the 'Diamond Sands' located about the mouth of the Krishna, and therefrom set sail again under more favourable conditions and arrived safely in Ceylon with the precious relic. The Ceylon monarch built for the relic a shrine in the Mahāvihāra, and ordered that thereafter, an annual festival should be celebrated by carrying the relic in procession headed by himself from the Mahāvihāra to the Abhayagiri Vihāra, where the holy object was housed and worshipped for ninety days. At the end of this period it was to be taken back in procession and restored to its permanent place in the Mahāvihāra. Fa-Hien who was in Ceylon in the year A.D. 412 describes this festival as he saw it. The invasion of Rakta-Bāhu referred to must have taken place a year or two earlier than the ninth year of the Ceylon

¹ R. Sewell in the *Indian Antiquary*, vol. xxxv, p. 293

ruler, the year A D 361. The date of this event may therefore be 359 or 360. The Yavana association of the tradition notwithstanding, could it not be regarded as the invasion of Samudragupta who lays claim to a conquest of this region, and the defeat of the ruler of Kalinga? The only Yavana invasion that may be regarded as at all possible about this time is the invasion of the region by the Śakas and others associated with the Kshatrapas of the west. These must have suffered by the extension of the Vākāṭaka power under Prithvisēna I. The assumption of Śakas or Yavanas escaping from the west after suffering a defeat, and undertaking a successful invasion of the east coast of peninsular India across the territory of the Vākāṭakas seems quite possible. If Samudragupta's invasion on the contrary proved of a destructive character from the point of view of the Buddhists and the Buddha relics, the name Yavana invasion need not be particularly surprising. The only other possibility seems to be that the armies of Samudragupta had a Yavana contingent among them who proved particularly destructive in regard to this region. In any case this seems to indicate the interesting fact that the diplomatic relation between Mēghavarṇa and Samudragupta is made the more probable by this tradition connected with this Buddha relic. It thus becomes clear that Samudragupta's influence as a great ruler of India certainly did reach distant Ceylon in the south, and possibly the Pārasīkas in the west and the Hūnas in the north. With this detailed study of Samudragupta's achievement before us it becomes more tenable to postulate that Raghu's *Digvijaya* of Kālidāsa is nothing more than a poetical exposition of the actual achievements of Samudragupta. The epic writer rounds off the *dig-Vijaya* by throwing into his list that which the historical document actually omits. Raghu planted his flag on the crest of Mahēndragiri, and passed on south to the country of the Kaveri. Then he planted a pillar of victory on the banks of the Tamraparṇi and marched southwestwards to make another pillar of victory of the mountain Trikūṭa. He proceeded across the Vindhya and set forward on the western expedition against the Pārasīkas along the land route, and marched northwards from the frontier of the Pārasīkas to the territory of the Hūnas, coming round by way of Badakshan and Khotan and re-entering the plains of Hindustan along the Shipe-ke route to come to the river Jumna.

V

SAMUDRAGUPTA¹

Samudragupta, in many respects by far the most distinguished member of a distinguished dynasty, has been brought to the notice of historians as the result of the comparatively newly organized Archaeological Department of the Government of India. Though something was known of him to the early Archaeologists and an attempt had been made to interpret some of the inscriptions of the Guptas, it is to the labours of the late Dr Vincent Smith that we are indebted for the knowledge that we possess of this interesting and eminent ruler of India. It is

¹ By permission from the 'Mysore University Magazine,' December 1923

Vincent Smith's study of the Gupta coins that started him in the course of research. He had all along been keeping himself alive to all that was made available in regard to the subject during the last thirty years and more, examining critically every piece of information brought to the notice of the public and incorporating the new material in various articles from time to time, so that he could give us a more or less full account of the monarch and his achievements in the latest edition of his book, *Early History of India*, which has now become the standard work on Indian History for the period. Notwithstanding the sustained labours of the late lamented scholar and his successful achievement, Samudragupta's is a character that would bear re-study from many points of view, and a new presentation of it may not be altogether superfluous. The late Dr Smith, perhaps by an unhappy inspiration, described Samudragupta as the Indian Napoleon, and thus gave to his achievements a character which on closer scrutiny it does not bear. This description had the further consequence of completely overshadowing the achievements of his father so that Chandragupta I suffered the same fate that Philip of Macedon did. Both alike were ignored by the historians, because each of them had the good fortune to be the father of a son greater than himself. It is easy to demonstrate that Samudragupta would have been impossible but for Chandragupta I, as an Alexander has been proved to be impossible without Philip before him.

In the third century of the Christian era the Guptas were comparatively a minor dynasty like many others of the kind, ruling over Magadha with the territory on the banks of the Ganges dependent on Prayāga (Allahabad) and Sākēta (Oudh). That there were Gupta rajas in this territory about that time, and perhaps even earlier, is known to us from the notes of the Chinese traveller I-Tsing who was in Nalanda in the second half of the seventh century. This Chinese traveller refers to a grant made to the Nalanda University where he studied, by a Mahārāja Śrī Gupta 500 years before his time, which would mean that there was a Mahārāja Śrī Gupta ruling the territory in the second century A.D. This family remained in obscurity to the end of the third century when it came into some prominence. It is probably in regard to this period of their history that the *Purānas* make the reference quoted at the head of the paragraph. To Chandragupta, the father of Samudragupta, is due the credit of bringing this dynasty to prominence. After the death of the great Kushan ruler Vāsudēva, the empire of the Kushans must have broken up, and the outer territories belonging to the Empire must have fallen away from the imperial authority and set themselves up in independence. Magadha and the territory dependent thereon must have taken advantage of the confusion, under the Guptas, and achieved its own independence. Probably the territory of the kingdom of Magadha was surrounded by kingdoms or states over which petty rulers or tribal chieftains held sway. The advance therefore of the Guptas to a position of dominant influence must have come about as a result of the building up of a superior military power and political connections. We have no information as to the manner in which the military power of the Guptas developed, but one act of Chandragupta which gained for him a considerable amount of political influence has come to our knowledge in the Gupta monuments and records recently made accessible to us. Coins usually ascribed to Samudragupta contain effigies of the king and the queen,

the latter of whom is described as a Lichchavi princess. These coins also show on the reverse a goddess seated on a throne, perhaps representing the Sri or prosperity of the Lichchavis. The Gupta inscriptions generally make much of this marriage alliance so that we may take it that the alliance was regarded as of the highest importance by the Guptas themselves. The marriage not only brought to Chandragupta the alliance of the influential tribe of the Lichchavis, but also must have brought accession of territory along with it. Otherwise representation of the goddess of the Lichchavis and the addition of the coin legend 'Lichchavayah' on the coins would have no particular significance. This would have rounded off his territory on a side which was perhaps the most vulnerable from the point of view of the territory of Magadha, as we know from the previous history of the kingdom. It seems possible also to ascribe to him some warlike achievements against the peoples of Bengal on the one side, and of 'the Bāhlikas across the seven mouths of the Indus' from the inscription on the iron pillar in the Kutb-Minar at Delhi, though this inscription is ascribed by some scholars to others. It is some such achievement that must have raised Chandragupta I to the dignity of a 'Mahārājadhīrāja,' as otherwise his neighbours would not have acquiesced in his assumption of this suzerain title. It may therefore be taken that both by the diplomatic alliance with the Lichchavis and by some warlike acts against powerful neighbours, Chandragupta raised the Gupta family of Mahārājās to the superior dignity of an *adhīrāja* or empire. This is what is symbolized in certain of the coins of the Guptas where the effigy of the king is shown with an umbrella raised above his head, which, whether the coins were actually issued by Chandragupta I or by his successors, would have no significance, unless it be that Chandragupta I was the man who raised the family to the imperial dignity. It was to the territory and dignity of this Chandragupta I that Samudragupta succeeded.

Samudragupta was born of the Lichchavi princess Kumāradevi to Mahārājadhīrāja Śrī Chandragupta of the Gupta dynasty. It seems that Samudragupta was not the only son, and possibly not even the oldest among them. Either because of his extraordinary natural powers or because he exhibited great aptitude, he was, for princes, very carefully and very highly educated. He is described in the one document that has come down to us as having delighted in the company of the learned, and as a great master in the art of getting to the root of things. He enjoyed among the learned great fame in the exposition of excellent classics, and perhaps even in the production of some. The course of education prescribed to princes was, in those days, comprehensive. We get a few glimpses of the course through various inscriptions of which the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavēla, the Kalinga raja, describes the course in the greatest detail. The whole course appears then to have comprised a knowledge of the Veda, specially *Rīg* and *Sāman*, mathematics, composition, particularly of state documents, *Rāpani* or study of coinage, *Vyavahāra* or law, in addition the art of elephant-riding, horse-riding and archery, etc., and finally even such subjects as *Vaisikī-vidyā*, the arts of public women. A king was required to undergo his early education and give himself a liberal course of physical training up to the age of fifteen. Then for the nine years following he was expected to specialize in subjects of direct value to the

the state of tribal constitution, lying in a line beginning from Delhi and Muttra and extending southwards through all Central India and Malva. Immediately behind them and beginning from the region of the southern bank of the Ganges between Allahabad and Benares, or even further eastwards, and extending across the Vindhya mountains southwards, lay the great forest countries under a number of petty chieftains. Then immediately to the east lay the territory of Magadha with that of the Licchavis on the northern side of the river extending as far east as where the Ganges actually turns southwards to reach the sea. This block was the territory under the control of the Guptas directly and came into touch on the southern side with the territory of Kalinga. South of that, what was the Andhra empire had broken up into a number of petty states of which about half-a-dozen are enumerated in the *Purāṇas*. Further south was the region of the Tamil country getting under the control of the newly rising power of the Pallavas with the well-known three kingdoms of the farther south. The whole of the Dakhan was under a dynasty which is known as that of the Vākātakas, and, in its best days, extended from Kuntala in the south to Bundelkhand in the north. This extent of territory the Vākātakas must have attained to perhaps in the last days of their ruler Pravarasēna, and perhaps before the rise of Chandragupta. It is however clearly ascribed to the ruler Prithvisēna of the Vākātakas, whom we have good reasons to regard as contemporary with Samudragupta. The coast region between the Western Ghats and the sea was under other rulers, perhaps for the most part of it under the declining rule of the foreign dynasty of the Kshatrapas of Gujarat and northern Konkan. The territory east of the Ganges and the region at the foot of the Himalayas remained divided among eight or ten rulers, and the region of the north-west frontier extending down to the sea was under a number of foreign potentates. This was the political division of the country at the time that Samudragupta had placed himself firmly upon the throne, and looked about for the successful completion of his father's efforts at the establishment of the empire of the Guptas.

According to the *prastāvi* of Harisēna therefore, Samudragupta set forward upon his expedition for a conquest of the quarters (*dig-vijaya*). If the order of recital of Harisēna is to be taken as indicating the actual order of Samudragupta's conquests, he seems to have invaded the southern districts first, but it is possible that this is merely due to the fact that a *dig-vijaya* should begin and proceed towards the right (*pradakṣiṇa*), as it is unlikely that Samudragupta would have started forward on an invasion of the distant south leaving his flank and rear exposed to hostile action. In any case, it would conduce to clearness to follow the record in this particular. His southern invasion seems to have begun with an attack upon the ruler of Kosala. There are twelve rulers, according to one enumeration it may be only eleven, that he conquered in this southern invasion, all of whom, he restored each in his position respectively on their tendering submission. The first ruler to be thus conquered is Mahendra of Kosala, and the next one is Vyāghra-rāja of Mahākāntārā. The relative position of these rulers has to be settled before proceeding further. Kosala generally is the country of Oudh, but it is often referred to as Uttara-Kosala. For an invader proceeding southwards from Magadha as his centre, this cannot be the Kosala that is meant. There are two other divisions of this

name that we know of Mahā-Kosala and southern Kosala. It is apparently these divisions that are under reference here. These must have been in a direction south or south-west of Magadha. The country of Kosala included a considerable part of what is now the Central Provinces and the hinterland of Orissa. We have some inscriptions of a Vyāghrarāja, as a feudatory of the Vākāṭaka sovereign Prithvīśēna I. Two inscriptions of his have come down to us in a place called Nachue-ki-Talai not far from Jasso in Bundelkhand, and a third in about the same region, probably that is the Vyāghrarāja that is referred to here, and according to this record, his territory is described as Mahākāntāra. This forest country must have been next adjoining the Kosala country and should have stretched southwards almost from the banks of the Ganges to, and perhaps even very much past, the Vindhya mountains. The Vindhyan forests were proverbially the great forest region according to all Indian literary tradition. The region of Kosala therefore would be immediately south of Magadha with a westward trend, and Mahākāntāra would be to the west of it with a southward trend. The next ruler that he attacked was a Maṇṭa-iāja, the Kaurālaka. This last word might well mean, belonging to Kurala. It is possible to equate Kurala with the modern Khurda and the place may have to be looked for in the region of Kalinga, the modern territory of Orissa. A people by name Kaurālaka are referred in the Brhat Samhita, and the reference may be to these. The identification with Kērala has been found unsatisfactory long since, and must be given up. The next ruler attacked is generally taken to be Mahēndra ruler of Pishtāpura. The whole expression is '*Pishtāpuraka Mahēndra giri Kauttūraka Svāmīdatta*'. The problem here is how to break the words. It is generally taken to be Pishtāpuraka Mahēndra, Mahēndra of Pishtāpur, and then giri-Kauttūraka Svāmīdatta, Svāmīdatta of Kottūr on the hill. It seems however that only one ruler is mentioned and that is Svāmīdatta. He was ruler probably of Pishtāpura and Mahēndragiri-Kottūr, which would mean nothing more than that the territory probably included what were two kingdoms with the two important capitals, Pishtāpura and Kottūr on or near Mahēndragiri. This latter seems preferably the interpretation as in Raghu's *dig-vijaya*, Kālīdāsa is content with stating for this part that the taking of Mahēndragiri was tantamount to the conquest of the whole kingdom. The next ruler happens to be Damana of Erāṇḍapallī. There is an Erāṇḍapallī in the Ganjam district with which this has been identified by the epigraphists. Then follows Vishnugopa of Kānchi. Then Nīlarāja of Avamukta. Kānchi is the well-known Pallava capital, and Vishnugōpa probably a Pallava sovereign. We do not know either of Avamukta or of Nīlarāja. The next ruler is Hastivarman of Vengi. Vengi is the Peddavēṅṅi, the ruins of which exist to-day, a few miles from modern Ellore, and a Hastivarman as ruler of that place belonging to the family of Sālankāyanas is known of about this period. The next ruler overthrown was Ugrasēna of Pālaka. Pālaka is a place often referred to in Pallava inscriptions, and seems to have been one of their northern capitals. It must be looked for in the region of the lower Krishna. The next ruler is Kubhēra of Daivarāshtra, and Daivarāshtra has recently been identified with Elamanchilī Kalingadēsa in the Vizagapatam district, with its head-quarters probably at Elamanchilī and then comes Dhananjaya of Kusthalāpura.

So far, we know nothing either about the ruler or about his capital. These southern rulers he is said to have conquered, and, when they had agreed to submit, restored them to their possessions. An opinion has recently been expressed by Professor Toussaint-Dubouché that this is all mere fiction, and perhaps the very most that could be conceded to Samudragupta would be an invasion as far as the northern parts of the Madras presidency where he must have been stopped by the activity of the southern rulers under perhaps the lead of the Pallava sovereign for the time being. While one might readily admit the possibility of exaggeration it would be doing something very different, if this interpretation should be accepted. If it is mere meaningless hyperbole why omit the kingdoms south of Kunchi? There at least was the Pandya kingdom which the almost contemporary Kalidasa found it necessary to mention in the conventional *dirupita* or Rāhu. The fact of an invasion as far south as Kunchi must be admitted, and why Samudragupta was satisfied with the simple submission of these south Indian monarchs will be understood readily if the particular purpose of his invasion is properly understood. We shall come to that question later. Probably he returned to his headquarters and started on a similar expedition of conquest of the kings of Āryāvartta, that is the middle region of Hindusthan usually described in Buddhist records as Madhyadēśa. Here nine princes are referred to without specifying either the capitals or the countries over which they ruled. They were probably all of them comparatively petty chieftains who held small tracts of country under their rule on the immediate frontier of the united kingdom of Magadha and the territory of the Licchavis. They must all perhaps be looked for in the Gangetic Doab and just outside along the border land of Central India and Rajputana. The sovereigns are in their order

Rudradēva,	Matila,	Nāgadatta,
Chandrarvarman,	Ganapati-naga,	Nagasēna,
Achyuta,	Nandi,	Balavarman

Nāgasēna and Achyuta were probably the same rulers that attacked Samudragupta in Pātalipura soon after his accession. They probably held territory in the Doab. Ganapati-naga was probably a Nāga chieftain who held rule further south with capital Padmāvati, near Naiwar in Central India. Chandrarvarman was probably the same person as the Chandrarvarman of the inscription on the rock of Susuma near Raniganj, whose territory probably lay to the west in Rajputana. It is just possible that he carried a raid across the whole territory of Magadha in the absence of Samudragupta, from his territory in the western borders of Rajputana. Of all others, we know nothing more than that they were rulers of Āryāvartta. The conquest of these rulers of Āryāvartta is said to have brought him the submission of all the forest chieftains who showed their readiness to render obedience and pay tribute without further action. Then he got his authority accepted in the five frontier kingdoms of which three were on the east and two to the north of Magadha. The three eastern were Samatāṭa, Dāvāka and Kāmarūpa, embracing the territory on the east of the Ganges from the sea to the Himalayas. The two northern were the kingdom of Nepal, and Kartupura to the west of it along the foot of the Himalayas. This would bring his north-western frontier into touch with what was the territory of the Kushan empire. The frontier

difficult to find a satisfactory explanation that the panegyrist found some reason for stopping short at Kānchi for a mere conventional *dig-vijaya* in fact Kālidāsa's conventional *dig-vijaya* of Raghu does not stop short there at all, but continues on to the Kaveri and farther south to the Pandya country, and across the peninsula to Aparānta and farther westwards therefrom against the Pārasikas. So the limitation imposed here is not by any convention of the panegyrist. We may justifiably infer therefore that the limitation was imposed by the political circumstances of the time and by the actual fact of achievement of this sovereign. Samudragupta's ambition was not like Alexander's for more worlds to conquer. It was rather the ambition more well formed than that, of uniting the territories of India that could possibly be united, under one ruler, with a view to set the whole country on a prosperous career on the basis of an efficiently protected frontier and well-ordered administration. The scientific frontier sighed for in vain by recent English statesmen was a frontier that had been achieved by Chandragupta, and probably retained under his grandson Asoka. Did Samudragupta then know the extent of the empire of Asoka? It is quite possible he did.

The *prasaṣti* of Samudragupta that we are discussing has in one part of it an expression which seems to give us the explanation that he possibly read the inscription of Asoka on the pillar on which he recorded his own *prasaṣti*. Line 27 of the inscription relates to a description of the special accomplishments of this ruler, and the details given there are that 'in his trained and cultured intellect, he put the counsellor of the gods (Brhaspati) to shame, in the accomplishment of music, he put the divine votaries of the art, Tumburu and Nārada, to shame, he established his right to the title of *kavirāja*, by composing many *kāvya*s which might have proved the means of living for men of learning, his wonderful and generous achievements would take long to detail for a panegyrist, he was human only to the extent of his having to carry on the affairs of the world, and he otherwise was a god, who had made the earth his temporary home'. Leaving the other details which are not relevant to the discussion, the point that calls for attention is the term *kavirāja*, and what it signifies. It has generally been interpreted so far as meaning nothing more than 'a king of poets,' a term of courtesy applied to a skilful exponent of the art of poetry, but the term *kavirāja* is a technical one, and has got a meaning of its own. There are ten classes of authors of works detailed, among whom the fifth is the class of *mahākavi*. This title is given to one who has acquired the capacity to understand everything that may be written in a language, and could, in his turn, compose any kind of specified work in that particular language. The term *kavirāja* is one of higher proficiency, and is given only to those who have attained to similar proficiency, not in one, but more than one language, and this efficiency in a variety of languages is generally limited to three, Sanskrit, Prakrit and what is called *dēśa-bhāṣa*, the vernacular. The way that the term is used in the record, and the description that is given of Samudragupta's title to the term indicates a proficiency in many languages, and if the many languages have to be interpreted in the usual way, it must be proficiency in Sanskrit, the Prakrit language most prevalent in the country to which the author belongs and the local dialect that may have been current at the time. The Prakrit language of Magadha must be something which came

Indian plateau as they could. The most famous among these rulers, in fact the one among them that could be correctly described as having essayed the foundation of an empire, seems to have celebrated a number of sacrifices that symbolized the establishment of an empire among them, the *aśvamēdha* itself, and assumed the title *Samāṭ*, with four sons ruling as Mahārājas in the empire. But curiously enough his grandson who succeeded to the throne after him drops the title as the inscriptions of the family clearly indicate, and this must have been due to some compelling circumstances, the details of which the records do not vouchsafe to us. It seems very probable that the rise of Chandragupta to power and influence made it impossible that the Vākātakas could go forward on a career simultaneously. Either as a result of war therefore, or by a stroke of diplomacy, Chandragupta managed to get Rudrasēna Vākātaka, the grandson of the great Pravara-sēna I, to give up the title and remain content with that of *Mahārāja* as the ruler of his ancestral kingdom which at the time must have been a fairly extensive one. If this was possible it could only be because an empire was felt to be a general necessity, and the only question was among the competing claimants which of the two was likely to achieve it and maintain it efficiently. If Chandragupta had achieved this by a stroke of diplomacy, his son Samudragupta had only to extend his influence farther over territories which had not yet come to acknowledge the overlordship of Chandragupta, and that seems precisely what Samudragupta did. Samudragupta must have set about it systematically having made up his mind beforehand to celebrate the *aśvamēdha* in due form, and make it really symbolical of the establishment of the empire. Hence the great importance that he attaches to the celebration of the *aśvamēdha* and the conquest of heaven by the conquest of the earth, which his coin-legends unmistakably indicate. According to the most accepted canonical works the *aśvamēdha* can be celebrated for a variety of objects. An *aśvamēdha* is celebrated for the purpose of going to heaven merely as several sovereigns before his time are said to have done, to give a historical example, for instance, Sūdiaka, the author of the drama 'the Little Clay-cart,' It may be celebrated for the attainment of a son as in the far-famed celebration of Dasaratha for the purpose. It may be at the end of one's career as in the case of the Pāṇḍava brothers at the end of the war as a ceremony of expiation for such sins as might have been committed in the prosecution of a war of conquest. Or, it may be for the attainment of empire as in the case of the celebration of a similar ceremony of the Rājasūya by the Pāṇḍavas in their career earlier. Gupta inscriptions generally describe the *aśvamēdha* as one that had long fallen into desuetude (*chirōtsanna*). *Chirōtsanna*¹ would literally mean, long decayed or given up, for as a matter of history we do know that after the days of Asoka, who, in his Buddhist fervour, put an end to it, there were several celebrations and several celebrants. Pushyamitra is said to have celebrated it, his contemporary Kharavēla of Kalinga seems to have celebrated something akin, and a Śātavāhana ruler of the Dakhan, the great Śātakarni lays claim to having done it equally. It would therefore be difficult to

¹ The term actually occurs in this sense in the Harisēna epigraph further down where his plenipotentiaries are said to be engaged in restoring rules to their territories.

understand *chūṭsanna* in the sense that it was given up for long. The term *chūṭsanna*, however, is found used in the same connection, of the *aśvamedha* in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa itself where it is explained in the sense that it had lost some of the elements constituting the sacrifice, and therefore a sort of expiatory ceremony had to be performed. That means, it is an old time ceremony, which had lost some of the details of its performance even so long ago as the time of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. The ceremony is brought to a close by the performance of a special *atirātrastoma* as it is called, which is a ceremonial apology for the shortcomings in the performance of the elaborate sacrifice. It is just possible that in the Gupta inscriptions it has that meaning but there is perhaps a little more in it than is implied in this explanation. At the time that Pushyamitra and others are said to have performed this sacrifice, the position of the celebrants could not be regarded as that of unquestioned suzerainty. Pushyamitra had to maintain a struggle through life against the Greeks on the one side, the Kalinga ruler on the other and the Sātavāhana on the third, and among the three Indian rulers, all the three of them lay claim to having celebrated this sacrifice, which, as they celebrated it, could not be regarded as in any sense, a sacrifice significant of an established empire. If the celebration had been done with other objects in view, the *aśvamedha* could have been celebrated by them all at the same time. Even Pratyasena's claim to have celebrated an *aśvamedha* could, in the circumstances, be regarded as of qualified application as an imperial sacrifice. Hence the *chūṭsanna* here might mean that the *aśvamedha* sacrifice was not celebrated for long as a full detailed imperial sacrifice, and Samudragupta might lay claim to having done it, it may be since the days of the famous celebration of the Rājāsūya by Yudhiṣṭhira.

A careful study of lines twenty-three to twenty-eight of the Harisēna epigraph will show clearly that all that is said above is not drawn from one's imagination. Line twenty-two ends that the 'severity of his orders was easily met by respectful obeisance, dutiful performance of orders issued and by the payment of tributes agreed to'. 'His fame spread to the ends of the world and received its satisfaction by the re-establishment in their possessions of the various monarchs, who had lost their possessions, or were otherwise forcibly deprived of them. Monarchs of distant countries, apparently not among the conquered, such as the Daivaputra, Shahi, etc., sent to him for his gracious acceptance, beautiful girls and other objects of presentation, with a view to obtaining charters, marked with his *garuda-seal*, for the enjoyment of their own territories, thus making the valour of his arm the protecting wall of the world. He met with no warrior to oppose him in the world by many good deeds, and, by the possession of many praiseworthy qualities, he brought the fame of the other monarchs low indeed in public estimation. He was master alike in bringing about the prosperity of the good and destruction of evil. He was a man difficult to comprehend by the mind. His heart melted easily at the exhibition of sincere respect. His pity was so great that he granted many cows, and hundreds and thousands of money. His mind was full of solemn vow to raise the low and humble, the helpless and the suffering. It is only war that excited him. He was like the god of wealth (Dhanada), the god of righteousness (Varuna), the god of rule or protection.

(Indra) and the god of punishment (Antaka), all in one for doing good to the world. His plenipotentiaries were constantly engaged in the restoration, to their wealth and former position, of the many kings whom he had conquered by the force of his arms. All these seem intended to exhibit, by the way that he exercised his authority, that he attained to the unquestioned enjoyment of it. While therefore on a superficial reading, these might seem to imply a thorough disciplinarian to whom severity was no matter of concern, a close examination of the passage shows unmistakably that while his exercise of authority was certainly firm, it was always tempered with mercy, at any rate, that is the idea that the writer of the *prasaṣti* wants to convey to his readers.

This great ruler is described at the end of the passage as the great-grandson of *Mahārāja Śrī Gupta*, grandson of *Mahārāja Śrī Ghatotkacha*, and son of *Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Chandragupta*, born of the *Mahādēvi Kumārādēvi*, and therefore the daughter's son of the Licchavis. He is himself described as *Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Samudragupta*. In the estimation, therefore, of Harisēna the author of the document, both the great-grandfather and the grandfather were only *Mahārājas*, and it was the father that became the *Mahārājādhirāja*. This feature has hitherto been interpreted as involving no particular difference in significance. The conclusion has been arrived at with more facility than logic that it was Samudragupta that was really the first great ruler who attained to the dignity of *Mahārājādhirāja*, Chandragupta being so described as a matter of courtesy. If inscriptions are to be interpreted in that fashion it would be difficult to understand why that same courtesy should not lead the author to describe the grandfather as well, as *Mahārājādhirāja* and the great-grandfather. If Samudragupta had made up his mind not to issue an official document, which incidentally describes his whole position and ancestry, one might possibly entertain the notion, even though it would perhaps be at the sacrifice of truth, but the document under examination is a deliberate *prasaṣti*, and therefore of a peculiarly historical character. A deliberate change from the position of *Mahārāja* to *Mahārājādhirāja* must have been made to convey what it signifies, and seems an unmistakable indication that it was Chandragupta I that raised the family to the higher dignity, whatever Samudragupta's achievements may have done to complete the work of his father. Nor, could this change of dignity be regarded as that of a ruler who merely called himself *Mahārājādhirāja* as the very change of title would have been challenged at once, as in the previous case of the Sunga monarch Pushyamitra, the Vākātakas were there to do it with adequate power, and perhaps even a justifiable historical position. It is therefore clear that Chandragupta raised himself to the higher position of a paramount sovereign, and Samudragupta merely gave the finishing touches necessary for its acknowledged exercise. The pillar was set up as if to reach heaven itself and carry there the fame of Samudragupta which had already spread throughout the world. This document is described as a *Kāvya*, and was composed by one of the courtiers who describes himself as a *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* who might be a commander of the forces or a judicial officer, Kumārāmātya, the son of a minister brought up along with the prince and who held the position at the time of minister for peace and war, Sandhi-Vigrahika. His name is Harisēna, and he was the son of Mahādaṇḍanāyaka Dhruva Bhūti, who is described as a

Khadya-aṭapākika This term has not been understood. One noteworthy feature is that *Harisēna* describes himself as a servant of the great monarch, whose intelligence developed itself by the opportunity he was graciously accorded of being in close attendance upon the person of the sovereign. This was apparently meant as a tribute to the superior learning of the monarch himself, indicating thereby clearly that the character for learning given to him was not meant in mere compliment.

It will thus be seen that *Samudragupta* was a sovereign who set up before him a high ideal as a monarch according to the notions of the time. What is perhaps more, that he made an honest and earnest effort to come up to the height of the ideal in actual life. It should be the most inappropriate description of him to call him 'a Napoleon who regarded kingdom-taking as the duty of kings' ¹

VI

CHANDRAGUPTA II VIKRAMADITYA ²

The third century in Indian History is a period of transition from the Andhra Empire through its stages of decay and dismemberment to the new empire that came into existence under the Guptas. All the shiftings of the powers and the arrangements of the struggling forces are far from clear. At the end of about a century of this struggle, there seem to emerge two powers, one of which was to attain ultimately the position of leadership in India.

These two powers seem to have been the *Vākāṭaka* and the Gupta. The *Vākātakas* were somewhere in the *Vindhyan* region and the Guptas in the Gangetic basin. The leadership seems to have passed ultimately to the Guptas. Although the phases of the struggle that led to this denouement are far from clear, there seems to be but little doubt that the result of it was the establishment of the Gupta Empire under *Chandragupta I*.

The ancestral territory of the Guptas was a comparatively small region on either bank of the Ganges, to which was added the territory of the *Lichchavis* by marriage, and the neighbouring regions by conquest, so that it became a compact state stretching out both ways, eastwards and westwards to keep out the enemies of the rising state. The *Vākātakas* perhaps suffered a misfortune with the death of the great *Pravarasēna*, and that cleared the way for the ascent of the Guptas, at the supreme moment. It seems that this ascent to supreme power was marked by the Gupta era, which has been accepted as the year A.D. 319-20, though the correctness of this has been recently called into question by Dr. *Shama Sastri*.

On the foundation that was thus laid by *Chandragupta* was reared a magnificent imperial structure by his son *Samudragupta*. The accession of this new ruler seems to have been taken advantage of by those disintegrating forces recently brought under the

¹ Some parts of this section will strike the reader as a repetition of the one immediately preceding. A recasting, it was suggested, may spoil the presentation. Therefore the article is allowed to appear here as it was actually published in the first instance.

² By permission of the 'Sir Asutosh Memorial' Committee, Patna.

control of the empire. Samudragupta had to beat off the enemies that assailed him, and make sure that the states that had been brought under control were true to their allegiance, and then launch out on his scheme of expansion, which brought the empire more or less co-extensive with that of Asoka. He succeeded in his effort partly by conquest, and partly by diplomacy, and left a compact empire to his successor, Chandragupta II.

This last is generally known to historians as the ruler who was the original of the traditional Vikramāditya of Ujjain, and his reign was otherwise remarkable in many ways. The following pages attempt to bring together facts so far known about this remarkable sovereign, and are presented as a constructive effort at the history of an important epoch.

Chandragupta was the son of Samudragupta by Dattādēvi, and was probably one among many sons. Chandragupta II ascended the throne after his father Samudragupta, according to the practice of the family, 'by the choice of the father'. There seems to have been no opposition of any kind to his accession, and the succession therefore was a peaceful one. Such a succession gives us the indication that the empire built at such great pains and organized by two of his predecessors had got into a sufficiently settled condition to be handed on as a peaceful possession. Chandragupta's work therefore was not that of the warrior statesman, but was one of a peaceful administrator. All the frontiers appear to have remained without disturbance of any kind except along the south-west where he had to carry on a war, the only war, of his reign. Chandragupta, 'the sun of valour' (Vikramāditya), had comparatively speaking, the minimum of war to wage. Notwithstanding the fact that his reign was essentially one of peace he was undoubtedly a valiant man possessed of great personal courage and as such deserving of the surname. Before proceeding to consider his warlike activity or his peaceful statesmanship it would be useful to take a survey of the general position of the empire. It has been already pointed out in the description of the achievements of Samudragupta that he had brought his empire in many respects co-extensive with that of Asoka, not necessarily as a unified empire under a single ruler which obviously was impossible in the circumstances of the times, but as something like a federation of states grouped together in subordinate alliance, not without an appreciation of the common interests that such a unity subserved. While the states of nearer Hindusthan formed probably an integral part of the empire the frontier states in the east and north remained practically independent, but on terms of active diplomatic relationship amounting to alliance. That seems to have been the case also in respect of the north west frontier except in the southern end of it where the Kshatrapa revival had become sufficiently aggressive to attract his attention. The Kshatrapas along the coast and their neighbours, the Vākāṭakas, seem to have been, to a great extent, at war with each other, and it is this hostility that has to account, at any rate, partly for the decay of the power of the Kshatrapas. After the death of the great Prithvisēna, the Kshatrapas appeared to have recovered some portions of their lost territory and a considerable amount of their influence, so much so that they appear to have assumed the offensive and made an effort at recovering the region round Ujjain which constituted

Inscriptions of dates 82 and onwards referring themselves to his reign are found in the region round Vidisa and Sīnchi, chiefly in Udayagiri. One of them goes the length of stating boldly that Chandragupta was there in that region on a royal progress 'for the conquest of the world'. The obvious exaggeration of the language seems merely to imply that this was an invasion undertaken by Chandragupta with a view to rounding off his empire in this particular corner and thus making himself emperor of a vast empire such as his father had left him, with this possibility of danger removed.

That seems the significance of the expression 'conquest of the world' which conveys further the impression that it involved more than one campaign and a gradual reduction of territory for final incorporation in the empire. Hence the inference seems justifiable that the war in the region of Western Malwa was a protracted affair, and was not a short and sharp conflict as the numismatic inference would lead one to believe.

Malwa had been for more than three centuries in the possession of a foreign dynasty, the Kshatrapas, which was founded by Chastana. It is now generally agreed that Chastana effected the conquest of this region which constituted in all probability a governorship under the Kushāns, very probably under Kanishka, but it may possibly be under Kadphises II. The greatest among these Kshatrapas was Rudradaman for whom we have recorded dates ranging from 52 to 78. These dates are now generally accepted as having reference

to the Śaka era. The last known coin date of the Kshatrapas is 310 or 31 x, which would therefore be equivalent to about A D 388, the uncertainty being due to the uncertain reading of the last figure of the date. From a study of the Kshatrapa coins alone, for Kshatrapa history that is almost the only source as yet available, it is found that the dynasty of Rudradaman comes to an end for a time between A D 305 and A D 348. During this period A D 305 to 348, the office of Mahākshatrapa falls into abeyance. During the first half of this period, A D 305 to 332, there were two Kshatrapas, and even this office disappears in the period 332 to 348. From an elaborate study of the coins of the Kshatrapas, Professor Rapson draws the following conclusions — 'All the evidence afforded by coins, or the absence of coins during this period—the failure of the direct line and the substitution of another family, the cessation first of the Mahākshatrapas and afterwards of both Mahākshatrapa and Kshatrapa, seems to indicate troublous times. The probability is that the dominions of the Western Kshatrapas were subjected to some foreign invasion, but the nature of this disturbing cause is at present altogether doubtful, and must remain so until more can be known about the history of the neighbouring peoples during this period.' The period under consideration is the period of the rise to prominence, first of the Vākātakas in the region of Mālava dependent upon Vīḍisā, and next of the rise to dominance of the dynasty of the Guptas under Chandragupta I. The first of these periods, that is the period of abeyance of the Kshatrapas, covers exactly the period of the dominance of the Vākātakas under Pravarasēna I, and the greater part of the period of the rise of the Gupta Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Chandragupta I. As we have already pointed out,¹ the *Purāṇas* make the clear statement that Pravīra ruled in the region of Vīḍisā, celebrated great sacrifices and had four of his sons ruling under him. We have also pointed out² that Vindhyaśakti, the father of this Pravīra of the *Purāṇas* was no doubt Vindhyaśakti the founder of the Vākātakas on the ground that the great Ajanṭā inscription seems to refer to Vindhyaśakti as belonging to the family of the Vindhyaikas. From these statements it becomes clear that whatever was the ancestral territory to which Vindhyaśakti laid claim, the greatness of the family under Pravarasēna was due to the expansion of the Vākātaka territory to take in eastern Mālava and even parts of Bundelkhand. If, as is very probable, the homeland of the Vākātakas had been somewhere near Elichpur, this expansion could only have been at the expense of the Kshatrapas for the time being. Therefore, as the power of the Vākātakas rose, the territory of the Kshatrapas must have shrunk, and that is what perhaps is indicated in the cessation of the title Mahākshatrapa and the existence still of the Kshatrapas. The crushing blow to the Kshatrapa power, however, came probably from the rising power of the Guptas. Vākātaka inscriptions make it clear that Pravarasēna I enjoyed the imperial title 'Samrāt' which is given up by his successor-grandson Rudrasēna I. This could only mean that the Vākātaka power suffered a reverse either at the end of the reign of Pravarasēna I, or, what is more probable at his death. The significant omission of this title combined with the glowing reference to the

¹ *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, 1923, on the Vākātakas

² *Ibid*

maternal grandfather of Rudrasēna I, the Nāga chief of the Bharaśiva family, leads to the inference that a calamity befell the dynasty of Pravarasēna, and the Bharaśiva chieftain exerted himself to retrieve the fortunes of this family. Even so, the restored Vākātaka monarchy could only sustain the inferior title of the Mahārāja, and could not maintain the claim to the higher title. The calamity could have come only from one of two rival powers at the time, or by the combined efforts of the two. The latter alternative seems impossible. The Kshatrapas do not appear to have been sufficiently strong to have brought this calamity to the family of their former rival although they must have exerted themselves in this direction. There seems, however, no doubt about a great struggle for recovery of power and prestige by the Kshatrapas, and they succeeded in it ultimately to a considerable extent. This recovery must have taken place later. Whatever might have been the actual cause of the calamity, Chandragupta I was ready to take advantage of it, and made use of the opportunity probably to administer a crushing defeat upon the Kshatrapas and their allies, the Bāhlikas, and that perhaps gave him the title to set up an *adhiṣṭhāya*. A short dynasty of three Bāhlikas is referred to in the Purāṇas as ruling in this region, probably the region west of Māhishmati, and the victory over the Bāhlikas by marching across the seven mouths of the Indus, ascribed to the Chandra of the Meharauli-pillar seems to be clearly in reference to such an achievement of Chandragupta I, and that is what gave the title to Chandragupta to set up an *adhiṣṭhāya* which had the simultaneous consequence of reducing the Vākātakas from their *Sāmraja* to the position of mere *Mahānājas*. The temporary extinction therefore of the Mahākshatrapa and the Kshatrapa offices seems to be due to this defeat by Chandragupta I. The recovery of the Kshatrapas from the effects of this crushing defeat to rebuild their power was made very difficult by the occupation of the Vākātaka throne by Prithvisēna I in succession to his father. Prithvisēna seems to have been a conquering monarch, and had not merely extended his influence over a part of the territory held by his ancestor Pravarasēna I, but extended it southwards to take in Kuntala also within the limits of the Vākātaka territory. Hence the conclusion seems warranted that the Kshatrapas could set up again only as a power, owning at least nominal subordination, to the great Vākātakas. That is what seems indicated by the rise of a new family of Kshatrapas and Mahākshatrapas, and what is perhaps more significant in this regard, their uniform assumption of the title 'svāmī' and the occasional creeping in of the title 'Mahārāja' after date 270, or A.D. 348. Their subordination must have been real when the great Prithvisēna was ruling. His death probably gave the opportunity for a more active revival of their power, and an attempt at the recovery of their lost prestige and of the territory once in their possession. It is this revived power of the new family of the Kshatrapas that must have called for the activity of Chandragupta in this region. As a counterstroke of policy Chandragupta entered into an alliance with their rival, the King of the Vākātakas, by giving his daughter Prabhāvatigupta in marriage to Prithvisēna's son Rudrasēna II. He then set about gradually reducing and incorporating into his territory the outlying portions of Kshatrapa possess and ultimately put an end to their power.

Such seems the trend of events that led to the great Kshatrapa war under Chandragupta II. The somewhat enigmatic statement of Bāṇa in the *Harshacharita*, and the unfortunately ambiguous note of his commentator Śaṅkarāraya both receive unlooked for illumination from a drama recently discovered by the search party of the Government Manuscripts Library at Madras. This drama is called *Dēvi Chandraguptam*,¹ and has for its subject the capture by the Śakas of the queen of Chandragupta and her romantic recovery by him, just exactly as is mentioned by Bāṇa in the passage referred to above. Some of the passages quoted therefrom, make it clear that Dhruvadēvi, the crowned consort of Chandragupta, fell into the hands of the Kshatrapas. The Kshatrapa ruler, whoever he was, made overtures of love to the captive queen of which she managed to give information to her husband. Chandragupta proceeded to adopt a heroic measure for the relief of the queen who was in such imminent danger. He assumed the guise of the queen and took along with him a portion of his guard disguised as women-attendants upon the queen, and managed to effect an entry into the city where she was kept prisoner. Throwing off the disguise there they recovered the queen and returned victorious. All this is said to have taken place in a place which is written Aripura in Bāṇa and Alipura in the drama. The former might be taken to mean nothing more than the enemy's city, the latter probably gives the name of the capital wherever it was. If this should turn out to be the actual and proper name of the city, and if it could be located satisfactorily, we may get a little more insight into this campaign.² Having recovered the queen, Chandragupta perhaps took effective steps to wipe out a dynasty of unworthy rulers such as the later Kshatrapas had apparently become, and the result of a protracted war was the end of the Kshatrapa rule in Konkan, Gujarat and such parts of Mālava as they still had possession of. The fact that the queen was actually carried off as a prisoner, and that Chandragupta had recourse to the dangerous stratagem of himself going, it may be at the head of a select body of his troops, gives a clear indication of the protracted and dangerous character of the war. It would therefore be safe to regard that the war was one in which both the Vākātakas and he were alike interested, and the marriage alliance between the Guptas and the Vākātakas was in the nature of a precautionary measure, and not one of a merely superfluous ratification of the treaty as a result of the war. As a result of this war the Gupta empire stretched out to the western sea, and the whole of the western trade of that region came within the sphere of the Gupta empire.

The Gupta empire of Chandragupta II must have included within it practically the whole of Hindusthan up to the frontier of the Ganges, if not the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra), beginning from the western mountains. The whole of the territory from north to

¹Ascribed to Viśākadatta in a Ms discovered in Gujarat (see *Purāṭatva*, v 1 47.)

²There is a place called Alirājapura and a district dependent thereon, but on the mere name it would be hazardous to suggest an identification. There is a place called Simhapura, alternatively Aripura, one of the two capitals of Kalinga, according to the Tamil classics *Silāppadhikāram* and *Manimēkhalai*. This has to be located in North Kalinga on the south frontier of Ranchi District. This seems too far east for even a Śaka raid at this period.

south between the Himalayas and the Vindhya was included in the empire. The great bulk of it was, perhaps, practically under the rule of the empire. The region extending southwards from the Vindhya almost up the frontiers of Mysore was also under Gupta rule, though less directly. The bulk of this region formed part of the kingdom of the Vākātakas. The marriage alliance seems to have brought them not only under the influence of the Guptas but seems to have resulted even in the bringing of their territory under the administrative control of the empire. Prabhāvatigupta, daughter of Chandragupta by a junior queen was married to Rudrasena II of the Vākātakas. It would appear as though Rudrasena's reign was a very short one. We have records of Prabhāvatigupta as regent on behalf of one son of hers by name Divākarasena, and she carried on the regency, apparently for a long term of years, as the Poona plates of hers happen to be dated in the 13th year, it must be the 13th year of her ward Divākarasena. Apparently Divākarasena died before he attained majority. He was then succeeded by a younger brother Dāmodarasēna, who probably became on his accession, Pravarasēna II. A record dated in his 19th year and another of the 21st year seem to be issued by Prabhāvatigupta herself. In his 19th and 21st years, it is very unlikely that Pravarasēna could have been a minor. It seems therefore clear that this Gupta princess took an active part in the administration of her son's territory even during the actual period of the rule of that son. That Pravarasēna II was not an efficient administrator seems thus clearly indicated. This is put beyond doubt in an unlooked for source in literature.

A drama by name *Kuntalēśvara-dautyam*, ascribed to Kālidāsa, has a reference which seems to bear directly on the point. The story is that Kālidāsa was sent as a Commissioner to the Kuntala country by the emperor Vikramāditya just to see for himself how exactly the administration was being actually carried on. The Commissioner returns to headquarters, and is accosted by the Emperor with the question 'what does the king of Kuntala?' The answer given by the Commissioner is, 'that Kuntalēśa, having placed the burden of administration upon you, is engaged in sucking the honey from out of the lips of damsels smelling, sweet liquor'.

This verse is quoted by Rājasekhara in his *Kāvya Mīmāṃsā* to illustrate that the drift of a passage could be completely changed by very slight verbal alterations. This very same stanza is quoted in Bhoja's *Sarasvatī-kaṇṭhābharana* in a similar context. It is however Kshēmendra's *Auchitya Vichāra Charitā* that refers the passage to the work *Kuntalēśa-Dautyam* of Kālidāsa, but it is the unpublished work *Śiṅgāra Prākāśa* that gives more details about the passage and makes it clear that it has reference to a Kuntalēśvara or Rāja of Kuntala. Another Sanskrit work named *Bharata-Charita* contains the verse²

¹ asakalahasitatvāt ksālītānīva kāntyā
mukulitanayanatvād vyaktakarnōt palāni-
pibati madhusugandhīnyānanāni priyānām
tvayī vinihitabhārah Kuntalānām adhīśah ||

² jadāśayasj antaragādhamāragam
alabdarandhram giri chaurya vṛtyā |
lokesi alankāntam apūṛva sētum
babandha kīrtya saha Kuntalēśah ||

which ascribes the composition of the Prakrit *Kāvya Sētu-bandham* to a kuntaḷeśa. This latter *kāvya* is, as is very well-known, a work of Pravaraśeṇa. The commentary on this work called *Rāmasētupradīpa* ascribes this work to Paravarasēṇa, the newly installed monarch from a passage in the text itself¹. It ascribes the revision of it to Kālidāsa at the instance of Vikramāditya. We already know that Kuntaḷa, the Southern Mahratta country and the south-western portions of the Nizam's Dominions, were incorporated in the kingdom of the Vakāṭakas under Prithviśeṇa I. Under his successors Rudrasēṇa II and his son, Kuntaḷa probably constituted the most important part of the kingdom, and hence one could understand why Pravaraśeṇa II is called Kuntaḷeśa. The statement of Rāmadāsa, that at the instance of Vikramāditya, Kālidāsa revised Pravaraśeṇa's work coupled with the ascription of the Drama *Kuntaḷeśvara-dantyaṃ* to Kālidāsa by Kshēmendra, makes the position clear that Vikramāditya, Kālidāsa and Kuntaḷeśa, the author of the *Sētu-bandham*, were contemporaries. That the *Sētu-bandham* was a *Kāvya* of Pravaraśeṇa is clear from the statement of *Bāna* contained in one of the śloka in the *Harṣa Charita*². From the point of view of history, the inference from these details in literature is clear that Pravaraśeṇa was an administrator who took his main business very easy, and he did so in the full confidence that, with his maternal grandfather Vikramāditya as his overlord, he need not be particularly anxious about the conduct of his government. This position is reflected in the grants of Prabhāvati-gupta. So therefore Vikramāditya's administration had actually to take the kingdom of the Vakāṭakas within the fold of the empire.

The Gupta empire under Chandragupta II may therefore be regarded as almost co-extensive with that of the empire of Asoka except along the northwest frontier. Along this frontier, it is doubtful, if the Gupta empire extended beyond the mountainous frontier of the west of the Indus. It is very likely that the region of Gandhāra and eastern Afghanistan were under petty chieftains, successors of the Kushāns under their suzerain the Kush-Newas³. This Kushān suzerain was overthrown in the first quarter of the fifth century by the irruption of the White Huns. Before this calamity befell the ruler, the Kushān state under his overlordship seems to have been a fairly compact and strong one, sometimes at war, perhaps more often in alliance, with the ruling Sassanid monarchs of Persia. The empire, therefore, was bounded on the west by mountains on this side of the Kharber, if it went so far at all, on the north and the east by the bordering kings and kingdoms as detailed in the *Prasasti* of Samudragupta, and on the south it went down to the frontier of the present-day Mysore, perhaps including the northern part of it. If it is permissible to draw an inference from what may be taken as the

¹ abhinavarāyāraddhā chukkakkhaliyēsu vihadima parittāviya mettiva pamulharasiva nīrvōḍum dukkaam kavvakahā abhinavarāyāraddhā chyutaskhalitēsu viḥaṭṭa paristhāpita maitriva pramukha rasikā nīrvōḍumbhavati dukkaram kāvyakathā

² Kirtih Pravaraśeṇasya prayātā kumudōjvalā sāgarasya param pāram kapisēnēva sētunā ||

³ Identified with Toramāna on certain grounds by Dr J. J. Modi of Bombay in a paper presented to the Third Session of All-India Oriental Conference, Madras

compliment of a poet in the remark of Kālidāsa, that the young ruler of Kuntala was devoting himself to a life of enjoyment, secure under the protection of his suzerain overlord, Vikramāditya's empire must have been a well administered one, where even the most distant provinces felt the influence of the imperial headquarters. As was usual in the organisation of Hindu empires of those days, the imperial headquarters had for its charge the internal security by putting an end to all causes of disturbance, or by an efficient method of settlement of differences. It had also to guarantee protection of the frontier. As far as we are able to see from the records of the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hien, and comparing his account with that of the two late pilgrims Hsien tsang and I-Tsing, the empire was traversed by road, at any rate, so far as Hindusthan was concerned, which enjoyed almost perfect security. This comes out clearly from what Fa Hien has to say regarding the Dakshina. 'The country of Dakshina is mountainous and its roads difficult for travellers, even those who know the way, if they wish to travel, should send a present of money to the king who will thereupon depute men to escort them and pass them on from one stage to another showing them the short cuts.' This must be understood in comparison with what he has to say of northern India. It is obvious that Fa-Hien here is drawing a contrast unfavourable to the Dakshina, and this can be understood from what Kālidāsa has to say of Pravarasēna's administration. In regard to the rest of Hindusthan, Fa-Hien's statements contain his actual experience and not what he gained from hearsay, as in the case of the Dakshina. Fa-Hien travelled through the whole kingdom of Gandhāra practically from north to south and after crossing the Indus marched along the trunk road to as far as the eastern limit of Kosala, and then crossing the Ganges travelled in a triangle from Rajagriha to Gavā, thence to Benares and Allahabad, and back again to Patna. From there he went across to Tīrnālypti and set sail for Ceylon. Through all this region no mishap had befallen him such as did to I-Tsing. This is clear evidence of the security of government under Chandragupta. Speaking of the kingdom of Kosala of which the headquarters was probably Srāvastī, Fa-Hien notes: 'In this country, there are 96 schools of heretics, all of which recognize the present state of existence (as real, not illusory), each school has its own disciples, who also beg their food but do not carry alms-bowls. They further seek salvation by building alongside out of the way roads, houses of charity, where shelter, with beds and food and drink, is offered to travellers and wandering priests passing to and fro, but the time allowed for remaining is different in each case.' The last sentence is reminiscent of the rule laid down in the *Arthashastra*, in regard to the stay of travellers in choultries like these, and the good institution of halting places seems to have continued, at any rate, from the days of the Maurya empire down to that of the Guptas in their best days. Describing the kingdom of Magadha, Fa Hien makes the following observations: 'Of all the countries of Central India this has the largest cities and towns. Its people are rich and thriving, and emulate one another in the practice of charity of heart and duty to one's neighbour. Regularly every year on the 8th day of the second moon they have a procession of images. They make a four-wheeled car of

five stories by lashing together bamboos, and these stories are supported by posts in the form of crescent-plated halberds. The car is over 20 feet in height and in form like a pagoda, and it is draped with a kind of white Kashmiri painted in various colours. They make images of *Devas* ornamented with gold, silver and strass, and with silk banners and canopies overhead. At the four sides they make niches each with a Buddha sitting inside and a Bodhisatva in attendance. There may be some 20 cars, all beautifully ornamented and different from one another. On the above-mentioned day all the ecclesiastical and lay men in the district assemble. They have singing and high class music and make offerings of flowers and incense. The Brahmans come to invite the Buddhas, and these enter the city in regular order and there pass two nights while all night long, lamps are burning, high class music is being played and offerings are being made. Such is the custom of all these nations. One has only to carry himself to a place like Kumbakonam on the day of Makha or to Tīruvīḍaimarudūr on the day of Pushya to see in actual fact what Fa-Hien attempts to describe in words. Describing the capital, he refers to it as the city of Pāṭaliputra, formerly ruled by king Asoka. He then goes on 'The king's palace and the city with its various halls, all built by spirits who piled up stones, constructed walls and gates, carved designs, engraved and inlaid after no human fashion, is still in existence'. In the following paragraph he refers to a famous Brahman Raivata belonging to the greater vehicle and the habit that he was in of washing his hands when the king touched him, as often the latter came to consult him on matters of importance. He gives the detail that he was over 50 years of age and that all the country looked up to him to diffuse the faith of the Buddha. This seems an indication that Raivata was not much anterior to Fa-Hien and may indicate that Pāṭaliputra continued to be the capital under Chandragupta II though it is not so stated in so many words.

Notwithstanding this position, Chandragupta seems to have made Ujjain his capital also, and perhaps continued remaining in it for a number of years as the habitual royal residence. It is probable he did so in consideration of the exigencies of his administration, chiefly the war against the Sakas and the consequent organization of the newly acquired provinces in that region. In the period previous to the undated record at Udayagiri, that is, down to A.D. 400 in all probability, his capital was Pāṭaliputra with the alternative Vīḍiśa, the modern Bhilsā. Thereafter Ujjain became, in all probability, his seat of residence, and therefore came to be regarded by his successors as the capital of the empire. It is common knowledge that Kālidāsa refers to this latter city, Bhilsā, as a capital.¹ Further on, he refers to Ujjain by that name in śloka 27, and again speaks of the same city under the name Viśālā in śloka 30.² This presumption that Ujjain was the capital of Chandragupta in the latter half of his reign is supported by the account that Rājasēkhara gives of assemblies (Brahmasabhās) that conferred degrees in arts and sciences in early days. One such assembly, according to him, was held at Ujjain to which he refers by the alternative term Viśālā, and the poets honoured

¹Rājadhāni in his *Mēgha*, śloka 24

²The references are to Dr Hultzsch's edition issued by the Royal Asiatic Society

in the assembly at Ujjain were, according to him, Kālidāsa, Mēṇṭha, Amara, Rūpa, Sūra, Bhāraṇī, Hariseandra and Chandragupta¹. In the same context he refers also to a similar assembly held for examination in the *Sāstras* at Pāṭalīputra. We have shown elsewhere² the evidence that Indian literary tradition offers for making Kālidāsa a contemporary of Chandragupta II, but he may have been a younger contemporary of the monarch, and if he had to undergo an examination in the Brahma Sabhā held at Ujjain, such a Sabhā should have been held under Chandragupta II, Vikramāditya. One of the conditions for holding the Sabhā is that the Rāja holding it must be a man of learning himself. Kings unlearned should not apparently hold such assemblies. That seems clearly to be the view of Rājasekhara³. Even in the matter of learning, therefore, Chandragupta must have been a worthy son of Samudragupta. We have already shown⁴ that Pravarasēna II of the Vākāṭakas was, in all probability, the author of the Prakrit Kāvya, *Setubandham*, and prince Pravarasēna seems to have been at the court of Chandragupta, as in all likelihood he received his early education there, as he was the son of Prabhāvatigupta, the daughter of Chandragupta II himself, and as we have very good reason for believing that she became a widow comparatively early with two young sons (may be three even) Divākarasēna and Pravarasēna, for the former of whom she was regent for at least 13 years. It is therefore very likely that the young princes were with their maternal grandfather during their period of education, while the mother carried on the administration in the name of the first son. So then Chandragupta's capital Ujjain was the real royal capital during a substantial part of his reign, and it seems very likely that Ujjain continued to be the royal capital under his successors during the strenuous times that followed.

Fa-Hien has a note in regard to the condition of what was known as the middle kingdom (Madhyadesa of the Brāhmins), which gives a general idea of the condition of administration, though imperfect in many particulars and perhaps even inaccurate in details. 'To the south of this, the country is called the Middle Kingdom (of the Brahmins). It has a temperate climate, without frost or snow, and the people are prosperous and happy, without registration or official restrictions. Only those who till the king's land have to pay so much on the profit they make. Those who want to go away, may go, those who want to stop, may stop. The king in his administration uses no corporal punishments, criminals are merely fined according to the gravity of their offences. Even for a second attempt at rebellion the punishment is only the loss of the right hand. The men of the king's bodyguard have all fixed salaries. Throughout the country no one kills any living thing, nor drinks wine, nor eats onions or garlic, but *chandālas* are segregated. *Chandāla* is their name for foul men (lepers). These live away from other people, and when they approach a city or market, they beat a piece of wood, in order to distinguish themselves. Then people know who they are and avoid coming into contact with them.

¹ *Kāvya Mīmāṃsā*, p. 55

² *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute* for July 1923, The Vākāṭakas.

³ *Kāvya Mīmāṃsā*, p. 54

⁴ *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, July, 1923.

'In this country they do not keep pigs or fowls, there are no dealings in cattle, no butchers' shops or distilleries in their market-places. Only the *chandālas* go hunting and deal in flesh.'

The state of Buddhism and the benefactions that it received, as well as the popularity that it enjoyed, he notes down in the following paragraphs. In regard to this particular subject Fa-Hien's knowledge must have been more direct and we may accept it more or less, as a correct picture of the general condition of Buddhism and the life of the Buddhists from what we know of the contemporary accounts of Buddhism and Buddhist festivities in the *Mahāvamsa* of Ceylon.

'From the date of Buddha's disappearance from the world, the kings, elders, and gentry of the countries round about, built shrines, for making offerings to the priests, and gave them lands, houses, gardens, with men and bullocks for cultivation. Binding title-deeds were written out, and subsequent kings have handed these down one to another without daring to disregard them, in unbroken succession to this day. Rooms with beds and mattresses, food and clothes, are provided for resident and travelling priests, without fail, and this is the same in all places. The priests occupy themselves with benevolent ministrations, and with chanting liturgies, or they sit in meditation. When travelling priests arrive, the old resident priests go out to welcome them and carry for them their clothes and alms-bowls, giving them water for washing and oil for anointing their feet, as well as the liquid food allowed out of hours. By and by, when the travellers have rested, the priests ask them how long they have been priests and what is their standing, and then each traveller is provided with a room and bedroom requisites, in accordance with the rules of the faith.

'In places where priests reside, pagodas are built in honour of Śāriputra, Moggallāna, and Ānanda and Buddhas to come, and also in honour of the Abhidharma, the Vinaya, and the Sūtras (divisions of the Buddhist canon). A month after the annual retreat, the more pious families organize a subscription to make offerings to the priests and prepare for them the liquid food allowed out of hours. The priests arrange a great assembly and expound the faith. When this is over, offerings are made at the pagoda of Śāriputra of all kinds of incense and flowers, and lamps are burning all night, with a band of musicians playing. Śāriputra was originally a Brahman. On one occasion when he visited the Buddha, he begged to enter the priesthood, as also did the great Moggallāna and the great Kāśyapa.

'Nuns mostly make offerings at the pagoda of Ānanda, because it was he who urged the World-Honoured one to allow women to become nuns. Novices of both sexes chiefly make their offerings to Rāhula (son of Buddha). Teachers of the Abhidharma make their offerings in honour thereof, and teachers of the Vinaya in honour of the Vinaya, there being one such function every year, and each denomination having its own particular day. The followers of the Greater Vehicle make offerings in honour of Abstract Wisdom, of Mañjuśrī (the God of Wisdom), of Kuan Yin (Avalokiteśvara), and others. When the priests have received their annual tithes, the elders, the gentry, Brahmans and others bring, each one, various articles of clothing and things of which *Samāns* stand in need, and distribute them among the priests, who also make presents to one another. Ever since the Nirvāṇa of Buddha

THE VĀKĀTAKAS AND THEIR PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF INDIA.

BY

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Among the many periods in the History of Hindu India which have remained obscure to a degree notwithstanding the great progress that has been made in the study of the early History of India in recent years, the period from the disappearance of the Āndhras as a great power to the rise of the Guptas remains perhaps one of the darkest yet. So much is this the case that the beginnings of Gupta history, one of the most brilliant periods in Indian History, is still wrapped in obscurity. This obscurity can be relieved somewhat by a careful study of what is known of the Vākātakas from *paurāṇic*, inscriptional and other sources so far as they have been made recently accessible to us in a form suitable for historical use. The name Vākātaka does not appear in any of the other sources of the Indian History of the period than the inscriptions of the particular dynasty to which they refer. This has so far left the Vākātakas of the inscriptions alone and isolated from the known dynasties of the Purāṇas and other inscriptions as well. Hence their importance in history had been neglected to the detriment of correct historical perspective even of the achievements of the most brilliant sovereigns of the Gupta empire.

THE VĀKĀTAKAS IN INSCRIPTIONS

Of the Vākātakas themselves there are a number of inscriptions accessible to us now of the greatest historical value. Of these, a number are copper-plate grants the typical of which may be taken to be the Chammak¹ grant of Piavarasena II.

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1 A S. W. I. IV pp. 116 ff and C. I. I. III pp. 235 ff.

and Balaghat plates¹ published by Professor Kielhorn in the *Epigraphia Indica*

The most important inscription, unfortunately a very mutilated one, is the great Ajanta inscription² of one of the feudatories of this dynasty. According to this last the genealogy of the Vākāṭakas would stand as follows :—

- 1 Vindhyaśakti.
- 2 Pravarasena I, son of (1) ?
- 3 Rudrasena I, son of (2) ?
- 4 Prthvisena, son of (3)
- 5 Pravarasena II, son of (4) ?
- 6 (Name omitted), son of (5)
- 7 Devasena, son of the predecessor.
- 8 Harisena, son of the predecessor

According to the most complete copper-plate grant, the so-called Balaghat plates of Prthvisena II, the genealogy begins with,

- 1 Pravarasena I,
His son, Gautamīputra, who married Bhavanāgā,
the daughter of the ruler of the Bharaśiva
dynasty (did not rule).
- 2 Rudrasena, Gautamīputra's son, and grandson
of (1)
- 3 Prthvisena I, son of (2)
- 4 Rudrasena II, son of (3), married Prabhāvatī-
guptā, daughter of Devagupta and Kubhera-
nāgā
- 5 Pravarasena II, son of (4), otherwise Damo-
dharasena
- 6 Narendrasena, son of (5), married Ajñhitabha-
ttārikā, a princess of Kuntala
- 7 Prthvisena II, son of (6)

A comparison of these lists shows that in the Ajanta cave inscription there are two names omitted, those of Gautamīputra, son of Pravarasena I, and Rudrasena II. It is possible to ex-

1 *Epigraphia Indica* IX pp 267 ff

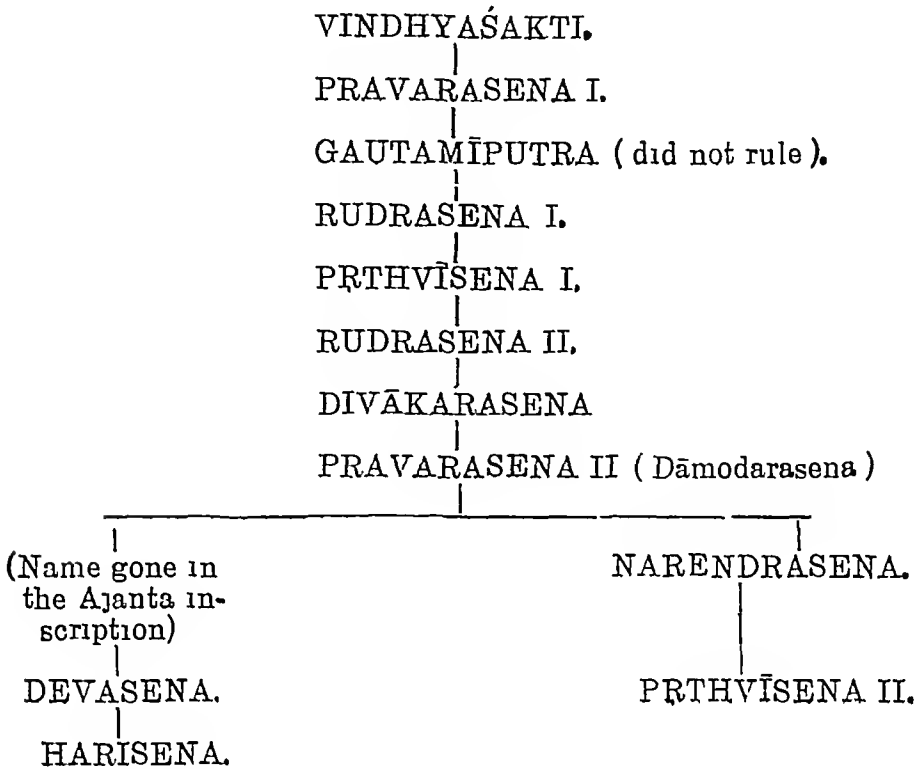
2 A. S. W. I. IV 124 8.

it is Narendrasena's good qualities that forcefully drew to him (apahrta) the Śrī of the family. This seems almost to imply a disputed succession which ended in favour of Narendrasena. In other words, Narendrasena succeeded to the throne of his father either after a war, or as the result of a demonstration almost amounting to war against an elder brother. On this assumption the accession of the other son of Pravarasena II in his eighth year would become impossible apparently as he could have succeeded only after Narendrasena and Prthvisena II. This assumption would give to the two reigns of Narendrasena and Prthvisena the comparatively short period of less than eight years which seems impossible in the circumstances. If in spite of the contrast involved in the 'forceful drawing of the prosperity of the family' to Narendrasena, we assume Narendrasena as the name omitted in the Ajanta inscription, it would perhaps make a more legitimate arrangement of the genealogical succession to assume that Prthvisena was the elder son of Narendrasena, and Devasena another son, it may be of a different wife, and making Prthvisena and Devasena brothers. The omission of the name Devasena in the Balaghat record would then be natural and the omission of the name Prthvisena II in the Ajanta cave inscription could be explained as due to his being not in the regular line of succession of Harisena or Devasena.

In neither of these cases, however, is the proper weight given to the expression which describes the character of Narendrasena's succession to the position of his father as recorded in the Balaghat plates. According to Professor Kielhorn, Narendrasena, "from confidence in the excellent qualities previously acquired by him, took away (or appropriated) the family's fortune his commands were honoured by the lords of Kosala Mekala, and Malava, and he held in check enemies bowed down by his prowess"¹. This interpretation goes too far in clearly indicating a disputed succession, and taken along with the succession of the other son in his eighth year of age, would seem inevitably to involve the inference of Professor Kielhorn that Narendrasena probably took the kingdom from an elder brother, or at any rate occupied the throne as against an elder brother. Assuming this to be the correct state of affairs the genealogy of the family would stand as exhibited in the following table, taking the

1. Ep. Indica IX. 269. The reading of the original text is corrupt and therefore uncertain.

elder brother to be the son whose name is gone in the Ajanta inscription



POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE VĀKĀTAKAS

The first point that arises in the political history of the Vākātakas is whether the Vindhyaśakti of the Purāṇas was the Vākātaka or no. It was pointed out above that in the genealogies of the Vākātakas that have come down to us it is only the genealogy in the mutilated Ajanta cave inscriptions of Varāhadeva that mentions the name Vindhyaśakti at the head of the list. Vindhyaśakti is there described as a *divja* (twice born) equal in prowess of his arms to both Indra and Upendra, and as the banner of the family of the Vākātakas. He is also given credit for great achievements against the rulers of the earth. The other inscriptional records that have come down to us do not mention the name Vindhyaśakti in the list. It was Dr Bhau Daji that made the first attempt to identify Vindhyaśakti of the Ajanta inscription with the Vindhyaśakti of the Purāṇas. This identification was objected to by Dr Bühler and others that followed him on two grounds. (1) that Vindhyaśakti is described as in the Ajanta inscription and not a single name in the

list agrees with those of the Vākātakas; (2) that all the manuscripts of the Vāyupurāṇa so far consulted gave the name of his son as Pravīra and not Pravara. These objections have since lost a considerable amount of their force. According to the collated texts given by Mr. Pargiter in the Dynasties of the Kālī Age, Vindhyāśakti followed the Kālikilas,—whether they be Yavanas or others, notwithstanding the statement in the Visnupurāṇa. The possibility of corruption of Pravara into Pravīra is so easy that it would be going too far to make that the decisive test on a question like this. The name Vindhyāśakti occurs in the *paurāṇic* lists in two connections. First it occurs in the list of the local dynasties who rose to importance during the period of decadence of the Āndhra power. There Vindhyāśakti is supposed to have followed the Kālikilas or the Kolikilas. It occurs for the second time among the rulers of Viḍiśā. There the son of Vindhyāśakti by name Pravīra would, according to the Purāṇas, enjoy the rule for sixty years and, 'will celebrate great sacrifices giving abundant largesses'. There follows the further statement that four of his sons would be kings. Taken together these statements indicate that Vindhyāśakti succeeded to the possessions of the Kolikila Yavanas whoever they were, and probably had a long reign. Or, it is possible to interpret this statement that he came into possession of the earth after it had been in the possession of the Yavanas for ninety-six years. This does not give us any indication as to what exactly was the territory of Vindhyāśakti. It merely gives us to understand that he acquired the territory in the occupation of the Kālikilas. The next passage has reference to the rulers of the territory depending on Viḍiśā. After a series of names, Pravīra or Pravara it is said would enjoy the city of Kāñcanaka. In other words it was he that acquired the territory depending upon Viḍiśā which he did not inherit from his father. Since our authority for the statement that Vindhyāśakti was a Yavana has lost a considerable amount of its force, the difficulty about Vindhyāśakti being described as a *dvija* in the Ajanta record need not prove an insuperable obstacle to the identification of the two Vindhyāśaktis. The rest of the description in the inscription, mutilated though it be, would be in keeping with the achievements of a petty chief who had by his own exertions raised himself to considerable political power. There is one expression in the mutilated record which seems to let us into the secret of this identification. According to the transcript

of Pandit Bhagavan Lal Indraji as edited by the late Dr Burgess, line 3 of the Ajanta inscription reads

Purandaropendrasamaprabhāvah
svabāhuvīryy(āṛjita)sarvalokah
+ + + + + + + + kānām
babhūva vākātakavamśaketuh

I would prefer to read the second half of the first part of the line

Svabāhuvīryyārṭtītasatrulokah

But this is not very material to the discussion. We want a word ending in *ka* for the '*kānām*' which obviously is the latter end of the word, a genitive plural. It seems to me obviously to stand for Vindhyakānām, and I would read this part of the line,

Rājā Mahendra Iva Bhuvī Vindhyakānām

This would give us the detail that Vindhyasakti who was the banner of the Vākātakas came of the family of the Vindhya-kas. It seems to be the name under which the family of Vindhyasakti and Pravira is described in the Purānas. The first line of the passage under the dynasties of the 3rd century A. D. in Pargiter's text reads,

Vindhyakānām Kule'tite

This must refer to the dynasties described in the previous section. We seem therefore to have very much more support for the identification of the two Vindhyasaktis than these learned scholars who studied these inscriptions in a previous generation almost. We seem to arrive, however, by adopting this conclusion, at a new difficulty with the statement when the family of the Vindhya-kas had become extinct in the next passage. This means that when Pravara had ruled for sixty years in Kāñcanaka and four of his sons, not necessarily after him, the family became extinct. This could only refer to the extinction of the rule of the family in the Vindhyan regions. This one could understand from what appears in the copper-plate grants in regard to the Vākāṭaka Pravarasena I. According to these copper-plates, the illustrious Pravarasena celebrated the Agnistoma, āptoryāma, ukthya, sodāśya, atirātra, vājapeya, brhaspatisava, and sādyaskara, and four asvamedha sacrifices. He is further given the title 'Samrāt'. The detailed list of sacrifices given in this recital of them seems to be details of the sacrifice from day to day leading to the final asvamedha, as

described in the satapatha Brāhmaṇa, and therefore it amounts to no more than the celebration of the asvamedha sacrifice of which he is said to have celebrated four. The assumption of the title '*Samrāt*' or his accession to a '*Sāmṛājya*' could only mean that he acquired new territory, or that he got into possession of such extensive territory that he had kings under him, and it may be that four of his sons had the title '*Mahārāja*' and ruled over various portions of his territory thus entitling him to the higher dignity of '*samrāt*'. According to these inscriptions none of his sons appears to have succeeded, his successor on the throne, according to them uniformly, being his grandson by Gautami-putra by name Rudrasena. That means, therefore, that none of his sons survived him. What is more significant, this successor Rudrasena I, drops the title '*samrāt*'. Does it not mean that some calamity befell the family at the death of Pravarasena, and that when his grandson ultimately succeeded to the territory of his grandfather what came to him was nothing more than the original family possession, i.e. the territory round Bhojakata, the territory peculiarly of the Vākātakas? This seems what is actually intended when the Purāṇas state 'when the rule of Pravarasena became extinct in the territory of the Vindhyas'. In other words, the authority of Pravarasena's family ceased to be a force in his newly acquired possessions, of which perhaps the most important was the territory of the Vindhyas. There seems, therefore, to be nothing irreconcilable between the statement contained in the Purāṇas regarding Vindhyasakti and Pravarasena, and the more detailed statements that we get from the inscriptions of the Vākātakas. There is a further fact which appears in the inscriptions which seems equally significant also. In speaking of Rudrasena I, much is made of his maternal grandfather Bhavanāga of the Bharasiva family. In the Vākātaka inscriptions as a whole, it is only twice that we are given information about the maternal grandfathers or fathers-in-law of the members of this dynasty. Such information is given to us in connection with the two Rudrasenas. In the case of the second Rudrasena, as it will appear later, the person that is brought into connection with the dynasty is acknowledged to be one in a superior position, and in all probability the maternal grandfather of Rudrasena I must have been an equally important person from the point of view of the Vākātakas to be given the distinction of a description such as that given. The plain meaning of that would be that some great calamity befell the empire of Pravarasena I, and that this

Nāga chieftain rendered valuable assistance in saving for the family an important block of the territory which belonged to the Vākātaka empire

The real explanation of this will depend upon the actual chronology of the family. The late Professor Kielhorn, careful and judicious epigraphist though he was, has offered it as his opinion that the Balaghat record of Prthvisēna II¹ 'may be assigned with probability to about the second half of the eighth century A. D.' From what we know of the record of the regent-queen Prabhāvatīguptā the late Dr. Bühler seems to have come far closer to the fact in assigning the Ajanta inscription² to the first quarter of the sixth century A. D. we may now say definitely on the strength of the Prabhāvatīguptā inscription, and also from other confirmatory evidence from literature, that Rudrasēna II was the son-in-law of Candragupta II, Vikramāditya. As we have already pointed out that the long reign of Prthvisēna I must have been contemporary with a considerable part of Candragupta II's, and possibly the whole of Samudragupta's reign. Candragupta I therefore must have been the contemporary of Rudrasena I, and perhaps even partly of that of his predecessor, his grandfather, Pravarasena I. It thus becomes clear that the calamity that befell the Vākātaka dynasty on the death of Pravarasena I was an event contemporary with Candragupta I and his rise to imperial power. Has the rise of Candragupta to an imperial position any connection with the fall of the Vākātakas from that position to that of a ruler of a kingdom merely? The two events seem to have had a vital connection, and the connection is partly exhibited in what was stated above regarding the actual possessions of Vindhya-sakti and Pravarasena I. From what we know of early Gupta history these facts stand out, that the Guptas before Candragupta I were rulers of Magadha, i. e. the territory close to the Ganges depending upon Prayāga, Sāketa, and Magadha according to the Purāṇas. The Licchavi alliance, which is referred to as a matter of great importance in inscriptions and even coins as of vital importance to the rise of the Guptas, must have brought in a fresh accession of territory and influence. Thus early in his career Candragupta must have risen to a position of great importance as a king with all the resources that would enable a man of genius to rise to an imperial posi-

1 E. P. Ind. IX 270

2 A. S. W. I. IV 136

tion The only obstacle in his way must have been another powerful aspirant to the empire in Pravarasena I of the Vākātakas In accordance with historical (and even *Śāstraic*), precedent there cannot be two emperors at the same time Either Candragupta must stand aside or the Vākāṭaka Pravarasena The latter having achieved a position would not perhaps willingly surrender it If he died, as he did after a very long reign and leaving a young grandson to succeed to the throne, that would be the occasion for the new aspirant to make the most of his position That seems to be what exactly had happened The Vākātakas must have been hard pressed and Candragupta must have gained the upper hand either by actual war and conquest, or by the slow extension of his influence and absorption of territory Whichever was the actual line that Candragupta adopted, the fact seems clear that he aggrandised himself at the expense of the Vākātakas under Rudrasena I Nothing else can satisfactorily account for the dropping of the much-prized title '*samrāt*' by Rudrasena I, the successor of Pravarasena I, and the assumption of the imperial dignity by Candragupta I

From the above it would seem clear that Vindhyaśakti and Pravarsena of the Vākāṭaka inscriptions are identifiable with Vindhyaśakti and his son Pravira of the Purāṇas who are clearly referred to as Vindhyaśakas The career of these two, father and son, must have followed the complete extinction of the Āndhra power, and must have reached a stage of advance towards the establishment of an empire in the comparatively long reign of Pravarasena I The petty state of the Guptas according to the Purāṇas must also have started on a career of expansion under Candragupta I From what is known of the history of the Guptas the inference seems justifiable that the Licchavi alliance of this Candragupta contributed in an important degree to this expansion This by itself could not have led to the assumption of a higher title by Candragupta I This must have been followed by some signal achievement of the rising monarch, and that achievement seems indicated in the lowering of the prestige of Pravarasena's successor It would therefore be a justifiable conclusion that the rival imperial ambitions of the Vākātakas and the Guptas got settled in a manner apparently satisfactory to both the parties, and perhaps in the best interests of the country at the time What these last were will be discussed in another connection. What is clear so far is that the high position achieved by Pravarasena

suffered an eclipse either at the very end of his reign, or as the direct result of his death, and when the Vākātaka state emerges under his grandson, it did so with diminished lustre

THE REVIVAL OF THE VĀKĀTAKA POWER

Rudrasena I's reign seems to have been a comparatively short one, wedged in as it were between the long reign of his grandfather Pravarasena I and that of the equally long one of his son and successor Prthvisena I. It was already pointed out that Rudrasena succeeded to the possessions of his grandfather much reduced in prestige and that he was able to come to that position possibly through the good offices of a powerful family of Nāga chieftains known in these documents as Bharasivas, whose modern representatives, according to the late Dr Buhler, are the Bhar Rajputs. However this might turn out to be, the Bharasivas played a decisive part in the restoration of the Vākātakas. Rudrasena's successor, according to all the available documents, was Prthvisena I. These inscriptions ascribe to him certain features as sovereign. Prthvisena is said to have been possessed of all the great qualities that his ancestors Vindhyasakti and Pravarasena had possessed, and is said to have ruled righteously and well. Further he is said to have succeeded to the elements of royalty which had been steadily growing in prosperity for a hundred years, the elements so indicated being, treasure (kosa), army (danda), other instruments of royalty (sādhana), descendants (santāna), and is said to have had a number of sons and grandsons as well. He is said to have followed in his rule the example of Yudhisthira. This recital of his qualities and rule indicates a long reign of prosperity, and, if we add to this what we glean from other records, even of an extensive kingdom. The Ajanta inscription seems to give him credit for the conquest of Kuntala, which is the south-western portion of the Dakhan, perhaps then passing from the possession of the Nāga Cūtus into that of the Vākātakas, to pass over again into that of the Kadambas. That is at one end of the Vākātaka territory. Almost at the other end diagonally, Prthvisena's authority seems to have been recognised in the reign of Bundelkhand as the short records of a Vyāgrarāja in Nachneka Talai show. These two records are of a feudatory chieftain Vyāgrarāja who is said to have done something in the reign of Prthvisena. Whether this is the Vyāgrarāja of the Mahākāntāra of the Samudragupta inscription is as yet open to doubt. Possibly he was. But in any case this is a clear indication

that the authority of Pravarasena was recognised diagonally across the whole plateau of India from the north-east corner in Bundelkhand to the south-west corner in Kuntala. The feature that Prthvīsenā succeeded to the possessions which have been continually augmenting for a period of hundred years seems to find its echo in the seal of his successors '*kramaprāptanrpa-sriyah*' which seems to be more or less in contrast with '*tatparigrhīta*' of the Gupta inscriptions. While therefore the Vākātakas boasted of a regular lineage of rulers from father to son in unbroken succession, the Guptas always made it a point that each ruler was chosen by his predecessor, as a worthy successor. The repetition of this feature in their official records by both the dynasties seems clearly to indicate a feeling of rivalry which however had been kept under control from considerations of political prudence. The long reign of Prthvīsenā I must have corresponded to that of Samudragupta and in part of Candragupta II's reign. So far, all the Vākātaka rulers claim to be zealously devoted to the worship of Śiva. But the son and successor of Prthvīsenā I is described as one devoted to the worship of Cakrapāṇi (Viṣṇu). It is this Rudrasena, the successor of Prthvīsenā I, the devout worshipper of Viṣṇu, that took for his crowned queen Prabhāvatīguptā, the daughter of Devagupta and Kubheranāgā. One particular feature in this is that all the successors of Pravarasena among the Vākātakas call themselves simply Mahārājas, while this Devagupta whose daughter Rudrasena II married is described as a Mahārājādhirāja. This is a clear recognition that whoever Devagupta was he occupied a position of higher political status than the Vākātakas, and the marriage of the Vākātaka ruler with a princess of the family of Devagupta must have been regarded as an alliance exalting to the dignity of the Vākātakas. The way that the records make the statement has a similar tendency.

CANDRAGUPTA II AND THE VĀKĀTAKAS

The problem of this Devagupta remained unsolved for a long time since the Gupta inscriptions were edited by the late Dr Fleet. It was Professor K. B. Pathak of Poona that gave an account in the *Indian antiquary* for 1912 of a copper-plate charter issued by Prabhāvatīguptā, as the regent of her minor son Divākarasena, as he is called in the record, who is probably an elder brother of Pravarasena II, known to us from other records. Dr Fleet definitely committed himself to the opinion that this Devagupta was a different person from Candragupta II as he

has indicated in a note to the Sāñer inscription where the name Devagupta occurs. On page 33 of the Gupta inscriptions he has a note that Prinsep translated this passage where the name Devanāga occurs so as to make the Devanāga another name of Candragupta II. While admitting the possibility of the correctness of this statement, he filled up the unfortunate lacuna of six letters in the line in such a way as to give it the interpretation that Devanāga was the name of the minister. The line reads,

*a dhena mahārājādhirājasya Candraguptasya Devarāja
ita priyanāma tasya samīkṣasampattinā yānaccandrādittya
tīrat sa adhikā lobhūpatam*

The sense of the passage is quite clear that five 'bhiksus' were to be fed perpetually from out of half the income from what was given in order that somebody may be possessed of the wealth of all good qualities. The grant of course is made by a subordinate ruler, and the natural interpretation would be that he made it for the possession of all the good qualities by his king. The idea of doing it for a minister would seem on the face of it somewhat peculiar though not impossible. It is generally for the spiritual or the moral benefit of the parents and of himself, the donor. It can equally appropriately be for the benefit of one's sovereign. But to consider that a subordinate governor made a donation like this in favour of an amātya seems an unusual procedure when the sovereign is also brought into close connection with the donor. Apart from that, the reading suggested is,

Devarāja ita priyanāma (amātyo bhavāt) y (e) tasya

The words supplied do not seem very particularly appropriate, so far as the lacuna itself is concerned. It strikes me from the plate given that there is no letter lost just before *tasya* and the lacuna after 'nāma' can be supplied by the words

dheya-alaukrtasya

so that the whole will read

nāmadheyālaukrtasya tasya

which would simply mean Candragupta who bore the pet name or the affectionate name Devarāja

The Prabhāvatiguptā grant gives the genealogy of the regent-queen in her own line, and brings the Gupta genealogy down to Candragupta II. She describes herself, as in all the Vākātaka grants, the crowned-queen of Rudrasena II and daughter of Mahārājādhirāja Devagupta and Kubheranāga.

The prince's name occurs in this grant as Divākarasena, but we know from other Vākātaka grants that she had another son, Pravarasena II. We seem then to be led by this grant of the regent Prabhāvatigupā to the identification of Devagupta with Candragupta II, establishing by means of this identification the contemporaneity of the Vākātaka Rudrasena II with Candragupta II. We may go farther and state that Rudrasena II was the younger contemporary, and therefore Candragupta II must have been partly the contemporary of Prthvisena I as well.

It was already stated that Prthvisena's was a long reign. That, coupled with the regency of Prabhāvatiguptā for her son, makes the inference that Rudrasena's was a short reign, probable. Candragupta's having been a comparatively long reign it is equally probable that it ran into a part, may be even a considerable part, of Pravarasena II's reign. Whatever may have been the actual relationship between Prthvisena I and Candragupta II there can be no doubt that Candragupta's influence dominated in the reign of Rudrasena II, the regency of Prabhāvatiguptā, and a considerable part of the reign of Pravarasena II. That this was so can be proved by certain details of literary evidence recently made available. The Prākṛt Kāvya Setubandha has long been recognised as the work of a Pravarasena. So it is described in one of the introductory *ślokas* of Bāna's Harsa-Charita. The work itself contains a reference in Book I, verse 9, that it was begun by a recently installed monarch and received a critical revision by a great poet, and thus attained ultimately to the great fame that it did, the author being classed with such great literary luminaries as Kālidāsa, Guṇādhyā, etc. in the estimation of Bāna. The commentary on the work compiled by a member of the Jaipur Rajput family in the court of Akbar, named Rāmasetu Pradīpam, explains this newly installed monarch as a Bhojadeva 'according to accepted tradition'. Rāmadāsa, the commentator, elaborates the position further by stating it that the work was composed by Pravarasena who was in the court of Candragupta, and received the critical revision of the master-poet Kālidāsa at the instance of the emperor Vikramāditya. This statement is embodied in a verse of his introduction to the commentary where he states it broadly that 'he composed the commentary at the instance of emperor Jallālādīndra (Jallalu-dīn-Akbar) just as Kālidāsa wrote the work at the instance of the emperor Vikramāditya'. This makes the posi-

tion absolutely clear so far as Rāmadāsa was concerned that Vikramāditya, Kālidāsa, and Pravarasena were contemporaries. How far is this literary tradition historically correct? Rāmadāsa lived in the sixteenth century A D. We can carry the tradition seven centuries back from him at any rate. Rājasekhara in his *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* quotes a verse to illustrate the complete change of meaning by the slight alteration of a word or two in a verse. The meaning of that verse is "a king of Kuntala having laid the burden of administration upon you and disports himself with drink in the company of sweet friends." This very verse is quoted in Bhoja's *Sarasvatī-Kānthābharana* and in his *Srngāra prakāśa* (prak IX). In the latter work the author states it that Kālidāsa was sent on an embassy to a Kuntala king. When he returned from the mission he made his report to Vikramāditya who sent him on the mission in the verse quoted, which is,

Asakalahasitavāt ksāhītāniva kāntyā
Mukulitanavratvādvyaktakarnotpalāni
Pibati madhusugandhinā īnanīni priyānām
Tṛayi vimūṭabhārah Kuntalānām madhisa

Change *Pibati* into *Pibatu*, and *Tṛayi* into *Mayi*

Vikramāditya construed the 'tṛayi' with 'Pibati' and charged him with making a report of ambiguous import. According to Rājasekhara the change of 'pibati' into 'pibatu' and 'tṛayi' into 'mayi' alters the sense completely, and that was presumably what was suggested as an emendation by Vikramāditya. Kshemendra in his *Mucitya-Vicūṇacarca* quotes the same verse and ascribes it to a work of Kālidāsa which he cites as *Kuntalesvara-dantya* which seems to be obviously a mistake for *Kuntalesvara-dautya*, from the expression in the verse itself. We have seen already that Prthvisena I lays claim to having conquered Kuntala among other places, and we pointed out that it was probably from the Cūṭu-Nāgas, the successors of the Śātavāhanas that he conquered it. There is nothing in the evidence accessible to us so far, that the whole of his territory such as it was, did not descend to Rudrasena II. There is very good reason for assuming that Rudrasena's territory descended quite intact to Pravarasena II. Since we know from the Gupta records the whole of the region of Malva had passed into the hands of the Guptas, Kuntala must have been perhaps the most important portion of the territory of the Vākātakas under Rudra-

sena II and his son Pravarasena II. Hence it would not be inappropriate to describe Pravarasena II as Kuntaleśa or Kuntalādhīsa. If, according to Rāmadāsa, Pravarasena lived in the court of Vikramāditya along with Kālīdāsa, and if he was a king who could be described, as he does, as a Bhojadeva, the author of the *Setubandha* must have been the Vākātaka Pravarasena II. The question now is whether the Vākātaka monarch could be rightly described as Kuntaleśa. We have already pointed out it would not be inappropriate so to describe him. There is evidence that he was actually so described, in a verse¹ in the *Bharata-carita* which describes the author of the *Setubandha* as Kuntaleśa. It thus becomes clear that the tradition embodied in the commentary by Rāmadāsa has at least good literary support, and confirms what is inferable from epigraphical evidence, namely that Pravarasena II is the Kuntaleśa referred to, and that he was the author actually or nominally of the Prakrit classic *Setubandha*. This would make Kālīdāsa, Candragupta II, Vikramāditya, and Pravarasena II contemporaries, and the date according to the *Mahāvamsa* of Ceylon for Kumāradāsa may seem to confirm the tradition that Kumāradāsa, the author of *Jānakiharana*, was a contemporary of Kālīdāsa also. The *Mahāvamsa* date for Kumāradāsa cannot be regarded as beyond question. The diplomatic relationship into which Ceylon was brought with Samudragupta would make a friendship between the Ceylon monarch and Candragupta Vikramāditya not improbable, and if Kālīdāsa travelled as far as Kuntala there is nothing to prevent his having gone to Ceylon on another occasion. Rāmagiri in the Central Provinces seems to have been one of the capitals at the time and the reference to it in Kālīdāsa's *Meghadūta* may be in compliment to the Vākātaka monarch. We can, therefore, take it that the reign of Candragupta II was for a considerable part of it contemporary with that of Pravarasena II as well. The administration of the large kingdom of the Vākātakas was neglected to a certain extent in the reign of Pravarasena II, but remained intact

- 1 Jādāśayasyāntarasgādhāmūrga—
malabdhharandhram guricauryavṛtyā ।
Lokesvalenkāntamapūrvasetum
bahandha kīrtiyā saha Kuntaleśah ॥

through the dominating influence of Candragupta II, Vikramāditya¹

THE VĀKĀTAKAS AND THE KSATRAPAS

From all that we know from the Vākātaka records so far accessible to us, the territory of the Vākātakas must have lain adjacent to that of the Ksatrapas in Surāstra and varying portions of the Konkan. The history of the Ksatrapas, as far as we know at present can be studied only from their coins, and Professor Rapson's study of the subject in the catalogue of Indian coins in the British Museum is an illuminating contribution on the subject. According to his investigations based on the study of the Ksatrapa coins, the period extending from A. D. 305 to A. D. 343 is marked by great changes in the political history of the Ksatrapas, one clear indication of which is the office of Mahāksatrapa being in abeyance during the period. In the first part of this period there were two Ksatrapas, and in the latter part Ksatrapa coinage ceases altogether. From these facts Professor Rapson proceeds to make the following observations: "All the evidence afforded by coins or the absence of coins during this period,—the failure of the direct line and the substitution of another family, the cessation first of the Mahā-Ksatrapas and afterwards of both, Mahā-Ksatrapas and Ksatrapas, seems to indicate troublous times. The probability is that the dominion of the Western Ksatrapas were subject to some foreign invasion, but the nature of this disturbing cause is at present altogether doubtful, and must remain so until more can be known about the history of the neighbouring peoples during this period." It must be noted that the period has reference to A. D. 305 to 348, and so far as Ksatrapa history is concerned there is a change of dynasty, which means that the older dynasty ceases and a collateral dynasty sets itself up in its place. The latter does so with the inferior rank of a Ksatrapa and not of the higher Mahā-Ksatrapa, and in the latter part of the period coins cease entirely, indicating that perhaps there were not even Ksatrapas

1 For the literary references compiled in this paragraph I am obliged to Mr. A. Rangaswami Sarasvati B. A., in the first instance, and to Mr. Ramakrishna Kavi, M. A. Reference may be made to the forthcoming edition of a Drama by name 'Kundamūla' ascribed to Dinnāga by the latter, who discusses in the introduction the age of Dinnāga and arrives at the conclusion that Dinnāga, Nicula, and Kālidāsa, and Kumārādāsa were contemporaries.

This cessation of even the inferior position of the Ksatrapas relates to the period A D 332 to 348. What does this indicate? The period 305 A D to 348 would include in the first half the period of expansion of the Vākātaka power under Pravarasena I. Pravarasena I achieved greatness, according to the Purāṇas, by extending his authority into the territory of the Vindhyaikas which was dominated by Vidiśā, in all probability the capital city. This progress of Pravarasena must have contributed at least to the narrowing of the territory held by the Ksatrapas, if not to its utter extinction. If therefore we could regard that the first part of this period corresponded to the latter part of the reign of Pravarasena I, we could understand the power of the Ksatrapas narrowing to make the assumption of the title Mahā-Ksatrapa impossible. They had in all probability to abandon Malva which constituted the central block of their territory. It may even possibly be that Pravarasena conquered the territory of the Ksatrapas and put an end to the ruling dynasty, and there was a revival of this dynasty possibly at the end of his reign, or in the disturbances following his death, and therefore corresponding to the reign of Vākātaka Rudrasena I. This period would at any rate correspond to the reign of Candragupta I. The latter half of this period 332 to 348 A D would fall in the reign of Candragupta I and his son Samudragupta. It would correspond to the period of Prthivīsenā I among the Vākātakas more or less. Samudragupta among his conquests claims to have subdued a certain number of kings in the region at least of Eastern Malva. Prthivīsenā's authority extended into Bundelkhand according to the Nachne-kī Talai inscriptions of Vyāgra. If this Vyāgra could be held to be the same person as Vyāgrarāja of Mahākāntāra reduced to vassalage by Samudragupta, his reduction must have taken place in the reign of Prthivīsenā I. That together with the expansion of Samudragupta's authority over various tribes, including the Sanakānikas, and the Ābhīras must have brought his authority quite close to the Vindhya mountains, and have contributed narrowly to reduce the extent of territory of the Ksatrapas. Prthivīsenā, on the other hand, claims credit for having conquered Kuntala. It was likely that for what he lost perhaps in the north, he compensated himself in the south. They must have naturally brought about a reduction of the dominions of the Ksatrapas south of the Vindhya mountains. This seems the explanation of the gap in the coinage of the Ksatrapas and the abeyance of the title Mahāksatrapa during the period.

We come upon another period of break between the years A D 351 and 361 marked by a similar political disturbance, and this period perhaps marks the expansion of Vākātaka authority under Prthvisena I whose reign was a long one according to the Ajanta inscription. The so-called Uparkot hoard gives striking evidence in this connection. There were 90 Ksatrapa coins in this hoard, all of them belonging to the reign of the ruler Rudrasena III, who called himself Mahā-Ksatrapa Svāmi Rudrasena. According to the Rev. H. R. Scott, who examined this hoard carefully, all of these coins belong to the years from 270 to 273 of the Saka era, that means A D 348 to 351. He makes the following observation in regard to this: "Many of these coins, especially those of the last years, are in mint condition and therefore unworn. From these facts we may fairly conclude that the hoard was secreted at the end of the first period of Rudrasena's reign, and most probably it was because of the revolution which then took place, rendering life and property insecure, that the money was hidden." Another peculiarity of this period, noted by Professor Rapson, is the introduction of certain lead coins with the humped bull on reverse, and the Caitya, crescent, and the sword on the obverse. Since they belong to the period of the absence of silver coins, it is possible that these are the introduction of a new dynasty. Professor Rapson surmises that the foreigner who introduced this must have come from a region where coins of lead had been in use. It is just possible that this is connected with the extension of power of the Vākātaka Prthvisena I, in certain parts of whose territory lead coins were in currency under the Āndhras. The successor of this Rudrasena III is like him a Mahā-Ksatrapa Svāmi Simhasena, his sister's son. The only date known about him is read 304 with the alternative possibility of 306. That would mean either A D 382 or 384. One peculiar distinction that Professor Rapson noted between the two varieties of coinage of Simhasena is that in one, his title appears Rāja Mahā-Ksatrapa, and in the other it is Mahārāja Ksatrapa. The latter transformation, he considers, may be due to the Traikūtaka title Mahārāja. It might as well be due to the Vākātaka title Mahārāja, as every Vākātaka ruler excepting Pravarasena had this title. If this change was due to the imposition of his authority by a foreign ruler, it might just as well be the Vākātaka monarch as the Traikūtaka. We know of a great Vākātaka monarch at the time who extended his

territory by conquests, and we have no knowledge of the Traikūṭaka ruler about the same period. There is a process of Sanskritisation also, introduced in the coinage of these rulers, which might be due to the same cause. There are two rulers whose names we know, the first from a single coin of his, the second from the coins of his son and successor. They have the usual style both of them of Mahā-Ksatrapa, and the same prefix to their name Svāmī, and have to be assigned to a date (Śaka dates) between 304 or 306 and 310, which would be A D 382 or 384 to 388, which is the last known date on Ksatrapa coins.

THE GUPTA CONQUEST OF THE KSATRAPAS.

The year Śaka 310 or A D 388 is the last known date of the Ksatrapas according to their coins. The earliest known date of the silver coinage of the Guptas, in the region which was peculiarly the territory of the Ksatrapas, comes almost twenty years later and it is generally taken, on the strength of this numismatic evidence, that the Gupta conquest of the west must have taken place some time about A. D 409 or somewhat later possibly. As Professor Rapson has already pointed out, this period is somewhat narrowed by the existence of the Udayagiri inscriptions of date 82, A D 401-2. There is another undated inscription which the late Dr Fleet ascribes to Candragupta II,—the inscription only mentions Candragupta without further distinctive epithets,—which is a record of the excavation and dedication of a cave to Śambhu (Śiva) by order of a certain Virasena, otherwise called Saba, one of the ministers of the king. The minister is described as the minister for peace and war, a man of learning and a native of Pāṭalipura. This inscription at Udayagiri indicates the extent of Candragupta's authority, and brings it quite close to Ujjain, the capital of Malva, and the headquarters of the Ksatrapas. The last line of the inscription gives us clearly to understand that the minister and the king were both there on an expedition of 'conquest of the world'. The process of conquest therefore of this region must have been gradual. We find already in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta mention of the Mālavas among the various tribes that he conquered. We have already pointed out that the Vyāgrarāja of Mahākāntāra probably refers to the same chieftain as the Vyāgra of the Nachne-ki Talai inscriptions. Probably the region Mahākāntāra of this inscription stands for the eighteen forest

Ksatrapas, would seem to bear witness to What is said therefore in the Udayagiri inscription of Candragupta's coming there on a world-conquest must have reference to a renewed war which itself must have been a prolonged affair The statement that we find made in Bana's Harsa-Charitam that the last of the Ksatrapas got killed, while courting another man's wife in the enemy's territory, by the injured husband in the guise of a woman is supported by a newly discovered drama by name 'Devī-candraguptam' According to this, Dhruva Devī, the Queen of Candragupta, fell into the hands of the western Ksatrapas and became a prisoner As a prisoner she was courted by the Ksatrapa¹ king whom, in the guise of the queen herself, Candragupta killed The commentator Śankara Kavi's explanation of the incident is borne out by the drama in every detail except that the commentator mistakes the queen for the brother's wife of Candragupta² This probably happened in the campaign on which he had come according to the Udayagiri inscription, which may refer to a time somewhat earlier than that of the other Udayagiri inscription referring itself to the year 82, which would be A D 401-3, while there is the possibility that the inscription may after all refer to Candragupta I The interval of a little over twenty years noticed by Professor Rapson between the last Ksatrapa coin of Śaka 310 and the first Gupta coin of 90 or more, i e A D 409 or later, need not be a bar to this, as a monarch would issue his own coinage in a conquered territory only after it had been brought finally into a settled government, and the need for coinage actually arises, which must be a matter of some time, and this probably refers merely to the conquest of Surāstra, not Malva It would seem therefore that both the Vākātakas and the Guptas contributed to the gradual reduction of the territory and the power of the Ksatrapas Their final extinction was due to the Gupta emperor Candragupta II

1 Nirṇayasāgara edition p 223, vide article in the Indian Antiquary for May 1923 by Mr A S Sarasvatī, B A

2 I suspect the reading of the comment, as printed, is an error, and that *bhrātrjyām* ought to read *bhartrjyām* If this should turn out correct, the Śakas or Ksatrapas under reference must have been already reduced to vassalage to the Guptas

THE VĀKĀTAKAS AND THE DECLINE OF THE GUPTA EMPIRE

The death of Pravarasena II appears to have introduced a change in the political relationship between the Guptas and the Vākātakas. The succession, as given in the Ajanta inscription of Varāhadeva, does not let us into the secret. The Balaghat copper-plates, however, give a clear indication that there was a disputed succession and that Narendrasena occupied the throne either by a coup d'état or, what is less likely, as the result of a successful war. What is really significant in this record of his son Prthvisena II is that Narendrasena's authority is said to have been acknowledged by the lords of Kosala, Mekala, and Mālava, the region over which Candragupta II extended his authority comparatively early in his reign, and maintained it inviolate by his matrimonial alliance with the Vākātakas and the uprooting war against the Ksatrapas of Gujarat and Kathiawar. Kosala, Mekala and Mālava among the three will include all the Vindhyan region extending from the coast of the Bay of Bengal in the south-east, north-westwards at least as far as the Aravalli hills and it may be even beyond. As far as we can make out from the Gupta records, Kumāragupta's accession to the throne was a peaceful one and perhaps during the early years of his reign he enjoyed peace also. It is from the inscriptions of his son Skandagupta that we hear of disturbances in this region from the tribes of Pusyamitras and Patumitras, whom Skandagupta successfully brought back into allegiance according to his records. Did the Vākātaka Narendrasena bear any part in this disturbance along the outermost frontier of the Gupta empire, did he also suffer with the Guptas from this rising of the tribes? Prthvisena II the successor of Narendrasena, is credited, in the same record, with 'having raised his sunken family'. What was the sinking of the family due to and in what particular did he manage to raise it? If the severe defeat administered to Pushyamitras and Patumitras by Skandagupta, which is supposed to have destroyed their power and brought them back into obedience, involved the submission directly or indirectly of the Vākātakas as well, Prthvisena might then have recovered at any rate partly the important position which his family occupied in the days of his predecessors from Pravarasena II backwards. He would have found occasion for this in the irruption of the Hūnas on this very frontier of the Gupta empire. It would thus be seen that the Vākātakas bore their

own share in bringing about the decline of the Gupta empire. In the whole period of the struggle of the Guptas against the Hūnas, the Vākātakas must have been left more or less to themselves, and this enabled Prthvīsenā and his successors to rehabilitate themselves to a very considerable extent, and that is what seems to be indicated in the records of the time of Harisena and his father Devasena. Harisena's is the last reign of which we have any knowledge, and then the region which is peculiarly the dominion of the Vākātakas passes into the hands of the new dynasty of the Cālukyas. The Vākātakas thus provide as it were a bridge that fills the gap between the Āndhras and the Cālukyas in the history of the Dakhan

Foundation of the Gupta Empire

According to the Puranas, the country along the Ganges from Magadha to Saketa came, in the century which followed the downfall of the Andhras, to be ruled by the Guptas. Inscriptions have not only proved the correctness of this statement, but have further proved that the Guptas, who are mentioned in a more or less obscure fashion in the Puranas in the midst of many dynasties, were destined to establish and rule over the most magnificent empire established by the Hindus in Aiyavarta.

I

With regard to the origin of the dynasty we are absolutely in the dark. Inscriptions deduce the family from a certain Maharaja Gupta. As the term *Maharaja* was demonstrably a title of feudatory chiefs and not Imperial rulers¹ (who went by the title of *Maharajadhiraja*), we can presume that Gupta was a minor chieftain who took advantage of the chaos which followed the decline of the Kushans and Andhras to carve, like many of his contemporaries, a chiefdom for himself in the region of Pataliputra. Gupta seems to have been known, after his elevation, by the title of Sri-Gupta. A clay seal in the possession of Dr Hoernle², as well as a tradition recorded by the later Chinese traveller I-Tsing (671-95), mentions the name Sri-Gupta. We know that the name Gupta was wielded by the father of the Buddhist saint Upagupta, who was a perfume-selling merchant. We also know that, in later times, the term Gupta has been wielded by Kayasthas. We seem to be warranted to infer from this that the Guptas were, comparatively speaking, people of low birth who raised themselves to a higher social status by their political greatness. We have also reasons to believe that the Guptas were originally Buddhists or at least ardent patrons of Buddhism. This is demonstrated not only by the evident connection between the Guptas and the Buddhist cult but by the express statement made by the Chinese traveller above referred to, that Sri-Gupta built and endowed (with 24 villages) a temple near Mriga-sikhavana for some Chinese pilgrims, whom he admired. This temple, commonly known as *the temple*

¹ This distinction between the titles was first pointed out by Dr Fleet. See his *Gupta Inscriptions*, p. 15.

² The seal bears the legend श्रीः गुप्तस्य a grammatical form characteristic of a period earlier than the 4th century as Rapson and Allan observe.

of China, was in existence at the time of I-Tsing, about three centuries later. The Buddhist pilgrim attributes Sri-Gupta, it is true, to a period five centuries before him, but it is now recognized that he was vague and depended on hear-say tradition and that he dated Maharaja Sri-Gupta by more than a century and a half too early. In 1902 Vincent¹ Smith fixed the beginning of Gupta's reign at about 270 or 275 A.D., and that position holds even today. There are Jaina records to the effect that the dynasty came into existence about A.D. 272, and the plausibility of Vincent Smith's conclusion is obvious.

II

Ghatotkacha-Gupta

Sri-Gupta, the founder of the line, was succeeded by his son Ghatotkacha who, it will be recognized instantly, bore the unusual name of the son of Bhimasena, the hero of the *Mahabharata*. The adoption of such a name seems to indicate the growing influence of puranic orthodoxy in preference to Buddhist heresy. Ghatotkacha is an even more elusive figure than his father. From the name *Sri-Ghatotkacha-guptya* which has been found in a seal discovered at Vaisali,² it has been assigned by Dr. Bloch to this monarch, but on the ground that the seal was found amidst later records of the reign of Chandragupta II (or rather his queen Dhruvasvamini, mother of Govindagupta, and officials of the latter's court), the identification has been doubted and the suggestion has been³ made that it probably belonged to a later prince, probably a Yuvaraja, of Chandragupta II, and not the second king of the dynasty. We cannot therefore positively assign the seal to this monarch. Ghatotkacha has been attributed to the years⁴ 300-320 with every probability.

III

Chandragupta I

Ghatotkacha was succeeded by his son Chandragupta I, the real founder of the Gupta empire. Chandragupta is the first sovereign of the line to have the imperial title of *Maharajadhiraja*, which indicates the change in his political dignity. His

¹ *Indian Antiquary*, 1902 p. 25.

² *Arch. Surv. Report for 1903-4*, pp. 101-2 and Plates 10-12.

³ *Indian Antiquary*, 1912 p. 3.

⁴ *Arch. Surv. Report for 1903-4*, p. 254. *Allen's Catalogue of the Gupta Dynasties*, p. 251.

queen, Mahadevi Kumaradevi, 'the daughter of the Lichchhavi,' is also the first to be mentioned in the genealogical lists. That this lady held a proud and high place in the affections of the family is seen in the fact that Samudragupta later on proudly called himself the grandson of the Lichchhavi, a title given to him in all later inscriptional records of the dynasty. It is also demonstrated by the fact that the coins of Chandragupta I bear peculiar legends associating his queen Kumaradevi and the Lichchhavi nation with his own name. These coins¹ have, on one side, the standing figures of Chandragupta and his queen with their names in Sanskrit and, on the other side, the figure of Lakshmi riding upon a lion, together with the legend *Lichchhavayah*. These coins, in the opinion of Mr. Allan, were issued not by Chandragupta but by his successor Samudragupta in order to perpetuate the memory of his parents, but Vincent Smith holds them to be the issues of Chandragupta himself. The latter view seems to be more plausible. It may be mentioned here that the Puranas do not mention the Lichchhavis. This has been attributed to the fact that, in the eyes of the Brahmanical writers, the Lichchhavis of Vaisali and the Nepalese were not of a superior order of society.

While it is not denied that the Lichchhavi connection was very important for Chandragupta, there is a difference of opinion in regard to the extent of that importance. Vincent Smith attributes all the fortunes of Chandragupta to the Lichchhavi marriage. He surmises that even Pataliputra was before the marriage probably in the hands of the Lichchhavis,² that Chandragupta got possession of it thanks to the marriage, and that it was only as the result of it that he was able to subdue the neighbouring kingdoms. But it has been pointed out by Mr. Allan,³ on the authority of I-Tsing, that Pataliputra had been in the hands of Chandragupta's predecessors, that Chandragupta was a conqueror who became entitled to the imperial title of Maharajadhiraja by his own achievements, that Vaisali was one of the neighbouring states conquered by him, and that the marriage

¹ See Allan's *Catalogue of Gupta Coins*, for 15 illustrations of this type of coin. The coins are illustrated in plate III and the legends, symbols and scripts are given in pp. 8-11. The king is standing, wearing a close-fitting coat, trousers and head dress. He has ear-rings and armlets. He holds in his left hand a 'crescent-topped' standard bound with fillet. His right hand offers a ring to Kumaradevi who stands by his side. She wears a loose robe, ear-rings, necklace and armlets, besides a tight-fitting head-dress. Both have a nimbate. On the other side there is the elaborate figure of Lakshmi seated on a couchant lion.

² See his "Early History of India," 4th Edn., p. 295.

³ *Catalogue of Gupta Coins*, p. xix, para 15.

with Kumaradevi was probably one of the terms of peace. It seems to me that, if we remember the previous career of the Guptas, there is more probability in the latter view than in the former. The pride of the Guptas in the Lichchhavi blood should therefore be, as Allan observes, ascribed more to the ancient lineage of that people than any immediate material advantage

No inscriptional records of the reign of Chandragupta I are available. But there is no doubt that the pauranic statement¹ that the Guptas were the rulers of the country along the Ganges, including Magadha (Bihar), Prayaga (Allahabad) and Saketa (S Oudh), must be taken to indicate the extent of his dominions. Dr Krishnasami Aiyangar has suggested, from the disappearance of the imperial title *Maharajadhiraja* from the inscriptions of the contemporary Vakatakas and the appearance of it in the records of the Guptas, that Chandragupta effected a transfer of imperial power from the Vakatakas, who had asserted it on the downfall of the Andhras, to himself and his descendants. Though it is not quite reliable to base such an important inference on mere titles, which have very often elastic meaning and application, there seems to be much plausibility in the theory.

IV

The Meharauli Pillar Inscription

Though there are no inscriptions directly issued by Chandragupta I, it is the considered opinion of many scholars that the famous pillar inscription discovered at Meharauli, a few miles off Delhi, and eulogising the achievements of a certain king named Chandra should refer to him. The pillar upon which the inscription is cut is now in the centre of the courtyard of the Kutb-Minar. It was removed from its original locality, wherever it might have been, to its present site in the time of Anangapala, the well known Tomara King of Delhi, in the 11th century. It is in pure, malleable iron and seems, in spite of its age, as fresh as if it was forged yesterday. It is for this reason regarded as one of the most magnificent pieces of iron work in the world. In fact it has been stated that, "it opens our eyes to an unsus-

¹ The *Vayu-purana* says

अनुगङ्गाप्रयागच साकेत मगधास्तथा ।

एताञ्जनपदान्सर्वान् भोक्ष्यन्ते गुप्तवंशजाः ॥

pected state of affairs", namely the capacity of the Hindus of that period to forge "a bar of iron larger than any that has been forged even in Europe up to a very late date and not frequently even now"¹ But the use of similar iron bars for roofing the temple of Konarak in Orissa indicates that the art of forging iron on a magnificent scale was then very common in India. The art has been completely forgotten. The pillar now stands twenty-two feet above the ground on a pavement. The depth under the pavement was once considered to be considerable, but Cunningham² discovered it to be only 20 inches below the surface. At the distance of a few inches from the surface, it expands in a bulbous form to a diameter of two feet four inches and rests on a gridiron of iron bars fastened with lead into the stone pavement. The total height of the pillar thus is 23 feet 8 inches. Its diameter at the base is 164 inches and at the capital 120 5. The capital is 3½ feet high and is supposed by some to indicate Persian influence. It has an *amalaka* moulding, however, which is regarded as a sign of antiquity. The top was apparently surmounted by the figure of a Garuda, for the inscription in it says that the pillar was raised as a flagstaff over the Vishnupada hill. Though exposed to wind and rain for the past fifteen centuries, the writing seems, on account of the unruined character of the pillar, as clear and sharp as if it was incised yesterday.

Passing on to the inscription itself, it was, we may note, originally discovered by Prinsep in 1834, and edited (with translation) by Dr. Bhau Daji in J. Bo. RAS, Vol. X, 1875. The original is —

यस्योद्वर्त्तयतः प्रतीप मुरसा शत्रून् समेत्यागतान्
वङ्गेष्वाहववर्त्तिनो मिलिखिता खड्गेन कीर्तिर्भुजे ।
तीर्त्वा सप्तमुखानि येन समरे सिन्धोर्जिता बाह्विका
यस्याद्याप्यर्षिर्वास्यते जलनिधिर्र्वीर्यानिर्लैर्दक्षिणः ॥ १ ॥
खिन्नस्येव विमृज्य गां नरपतेर्गर्भाश्रितस्येतरा
मूर्त्या कर्मजितावनि गतवतः कित्या स्थितस्य क्षितौ ।
शान्तस्येव महावने हुतभुजो यस्य प्रतापो महा
नद्याप्युत्सृजति प्रणाशितरिपोर्यत्नस्य शेषः क्षांतम् ॥ २ ॥

¹ Fergusson, p 508

² Arch Surv. Rep., Vol. IV

प्राप्तेन स्वभुजार्जितञ्च सुचिरञ्चैकाधिराज्यं क्षितौ

चन्द्राद्वेन समग्रचन्द्रसदृशीं वक्रश्रिय विभ्रता ।

तेनाय प्रणिधाय भूमिपतिना धावेनविष्णो [विष्णौ] मति

प्रांशुर्विष्णुपदे गिरौ भगवतो विष्णोर्ध्वजः स्थापितः ॥ ३ ॥

The inscription¹ says that a king named Chandra, whose face resembled Chandia, overthrew and pushed back a federation of kings that attacked him in Vanga (Bengal), thus writing his fame on his shoulders (*i.e.*, had the mark of victorious arms on his shoulders), then crossed the seven mouths of the Sindu, and vanquished the Bahlikas in battle. The southern ocean itself, it continues, was perfumed by the breeze of his valour. After enjoying the *Aikadhirajya* (the sole sovereignty of the world), which he had acquired by his own aims, for a long time, Chandra, whose thoughts were devoutly centred on Vishnu, installed a lofty banner of Vishnu in the Vishnupada hill. He left this world as though tired of it and as though he was desirous of winning the other world by his virtues. But, though his bodily form was gone, he still lives on earth by his fame, and his might, like a quenched conflagration, still causes terror in the minds of his enemies.

Three things are obvious from this inscription, *viz.*, (1) that no clue is given to the dynasty to which Chandra belonged, (2) that Chandia was conqueror of the ~~region from Bengal to the~~ land of the Bahlikas and from an undefined limit in the north to the southern ocean (by which is apparently intended the Arabian sea), and (3) that he was a devotee of Vishnu who perpetuated his faith by planting a Garuda-dhaja over the Vishnu-pada-giri. No date is given. Further, the record is posthumous. Apparently, the inscription was engraved just after the death of Chandra whom it eulogises, but there is no clue as to who issued it.

¹ For later editions and translations see *Gupta Inscrns* (No 32, pp 139-142), Plate XXI A, J R A S for 1907 (where V A Smith edits and translates it), pp 1-18. The letter धा is clear in the inscrn. Some scholars regard it as a mistake for भा. Allan suggested धाव to be the name of the king. Dr Krishnasami Aiyangar would retain the expression धावेन but make it the epithet of the expression भूमिपतिना, meaning *pure-minded*. Dr Krishnasami Aiyangar rightly corrects Vincent Smith in his interpretation of Vishnu's flag. It does not mean a flag with Vishnu on the top of it but the Garuda flag.

A word about the original locality of the pillar is necessary because it is upon it that a considerable portion of the discussion of the question at issue will hinge (In Vincent Smith's opinion¹ the pillar was originally at Mathura and transplanted at Delhi in its present locality by the Tomara King Anangapala about A D 1052. A second view is that it was probably at Gaya, a third view locates the Vishnupada at Prayaga (Allahabad), identifying it with the one referred to in the ancestral ceremonies of an orthodox Hindu in the present day. A fourth view is that it was somewhere in or near the Bahlika country. Mr B Bhattopadhyaya² quotes the *Ramayana* to prove that it was a peak or some sacred spot in the Sudaman mountains in or near the Bahlika country, which he prefers to identify not with Baluchistan but farther up in the valley of the Oxus. Still another view is that the pillar was originally at Delhi itself, that it was not removed from anywhere else. Dr Krishnasami Aiyangar³—, for instance, says, "There is epigraphical variant that Biyana at the south end of the Delhi ridge goes by the name of Sri-padam according to Dr. Fleet (Gupta Inscrns p 251). If one part of the hill be called Sri-padam, the possibility of another named Vishnupada does not appear to be so hopelessly unwarranted." Dr Krishnasami Aiyangar argues that the pillar was probably the original part of a Vishnu temple built by Anangapala and not removed from elsewhere. The pillar "is fastened on the floor of Anangapala's temple in a layer which constituted the flooring of the Hindu temple and distinctly underneath the flooring of the Mohammedan mosque, thereby indicating clearly that it could not have been removed to the present site by the Mohammedan builders of the mosque. If anybody removed it from anywhere else, it must have been the Hindu Anangapala who must have done so." Dr Krishnasami Aiyangar argues that

¹ J R A S 1897, pp 1-18

² Indian Review, March 1914, p 193. The Sanskrit passage is *Ayodhyakanda*, 68, 17-19. I quote from the Grantha edn of 1890.

“(तेदूताः—तेरुरिक्षुमती + ऽनदीम् ॥ १७ ॥

अपेक्ष्याञ्जलिपानांश्च ब्राह्मणान् वेदपारगान् ।

ययुर्मध्येन वाह-लोकान् सुदामान् च पर्वतम् ॥ १८ ॥

विष्णोःपदं प्रेक्षमाणाः ।”

³ The *Hindu*, April 11, 1928.

no orthodox Hindu would have done it. He concludes that Anangapala probably extended a temple already in existence, of which the pillar had been a part.

Of these views, the Bahlika theory can be given up. Of the other theories the Delhi theory has got the merit of simplicity and there is no reason, it seems to me, to dispute the view put forth by Dr. Krishnasami Aiyangar. But if the theory of transplantation is accepted, the greatest amount of plausibility lies in connection with Mathura. Both Prayaga and Gaya are too far away to have enabled Anangapala to remove it. Geographical and political circumstances do not favour the theory of removal from such distance.

(We shall now pass on to study the inscription with particular reference to the identity of Chandra, which has given rise to considerable speculation. Dr. Bhau Daji assigned the inscription on palæographical grounds to late 5th or early 6th century.¹ Dr. Hoernle was inclined, on the same palæographical ground, to place it in the beginning of the 5th century and therefore to identify Chandra with Chandragupta II Vikramaditya, the great Gupta Emperor who, as we shall see later on, lived in the first decade of the 5th century.² In his earlier writings, Vincent Smith³ supported this view. Discussing in 1897 the probability of both the³ Chandraguptas he concluded that the identification with the first Chandragupta is impossible on two grounds. First the dominions of Chandragupta I were not, if we are to judge from the list of conquests made by his successor (Samudragupta), extensive. Secondly there are no evidences to prove that he conquered either Bengal or the Bahlika country,⁴ even if we take that the latter meant not Balkh (as Dr. Kern rendered it in his *Bṛihad samhita*) but some region near Baluchistan. On the contrary Chandragupta II was a devotee of Vishnu just like Chandra of Meharauli. Vincent Smith therefore decided in favour of Chandragupta II.

¹ J B O R A S, 1875

² He points out that the Gupta script of the N E variety in which Meharauli inscription is cut, is found in inscriptions ranging from the time of Samudragupta to about 467, See *Ind Antq*, Vol. 21, p 43 ff

³ J R A S 1897

⁴ By *Bahlika* is meant not Balkh in Afghanistan but some country near Baluchistan. See *Ibid*, p 8. Also *Ind Antq*, Vol. 22, p 174, 192-3. Allan points out that the term was used, like Yavanas, Pahlavas, etc. to denote foreign tribes rather vaguely. See his *corr*s, p xxxvi, para 49

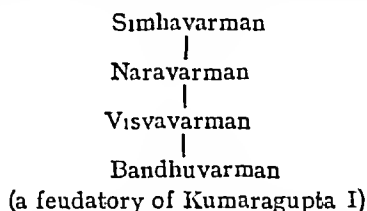
Dr. Fleet,¹ on the contrary assigned the inscription, on palæographical ground, to the age of Samudragupta and suggested that Chandra might be Chandiagupta I, the grandfather of Chandragupta II and the first emperor of the Gupta line. Dr Fleet was very tentative in his suggestion, and made the additional surmise that Chandra might be a Hun chief, not improbably a brother of Mihirakula, who, it is well-known, belonged to the first half of the 6th century A D. One is rather surprised to note that Dr. Fleet failed to observe the palæographical inconsistency in his two suggestions, but scholars have always taken only his first suggestion seriously and, rightly I believe, ignored the other.

Meanwhile in 1895 Mr. Nagendra Nath Vasu discovered² an inscription at a rock called Susuniya in Bankura District, Bengal, in which it was stated that a Maharaja Chandravarman who was the son of Siddhavarma and the king of the Pushkar lake (*Pushkara-mbudhipati*) dedicated a wheel (Chakra) to Vishnu. Mr Vasu suggested that this Chandravarman was the Chandra of Mehrauli. Mahamahopadhyaya Hariprasad Sastri made certain corrections in Mr Nagendra Nath's readings³. He pointed out that the original words in the text are not पुष्कराम्बुधिपति and सिद्धवर्मन् but respectively पुष्करणाधिपति (i.e., the king of Pushkarana, which he identified with Pokaina, a well-known city in the Jodhpur State) and सिंह-वर्मन्. He however agreed with Mr Nagendra Nath in concluding that the Chandravarman who dedicated a *Chakra*

¹ Gupta Inscriptions, p 110

² Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1895, pp 177-80. And *Ep Ind*, Vol XIII, p 133 ff

³ See *Ind Antq*, 1913, pp 217-19. Mr Sastri drew attention to (1) the recently discovered Mandasor inscription of Naravarman dated in Malava era 461 (i.e. 404 A D), (2) the Gangadhar inscn of V S 480 (420 A D) and (3) another Mandasor inscn of V S 493 (436 A D), and on the basis of all these gives this genealogy—



Mr Sastri identified Simhavarman in the above list with Simhavarman of Susuniya and suggested that Naravarman and Chandravarman, whom he identified with Chandra of Mehrauli, were probably brothers. From the fact that both Chandravarman and Naravarman are styled *Maharajas* and not *Maharajadhirajas* he inferred that they did not accept as yet Gupta supremacy and that Chandravarman was conquered by Samudragupta probably after an invasion of Bengal.

in the Susuniya rock and the Chandia who set up the pillar on the Vishnu-pada-giri were identical. Both these writers also surmised that he was the same Chandavarman who, the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta tells us, was conquered with eight other kings of Aryavarta by that monarch. Mr. Vincent Smith¹ accepted this view in his latest edition of his *Early History* (1924), thus giving up his previous views on the subject.

In an article in the *Indian Review* of March 1914 (p. 190 ff) Mr. Brija Gopal Bhattacharya criticised the views of Nagendra Nath Basu and Haraprasada Sastri and argued in favour of Chandragupta II. He pointed out that Naravarman and his successors *did* acknowledge the Gupta Supremacy—a fact denied by Mr. Sastri and made the basis of his argument in favour of a pre-Samudragupta date. “Mr. Sastri says that Naravarman and his son Visnavarman do not seem to have acknowledged the supremacy of the Guptas. But Sir D. R. Bhandarkar has shown (see *Ind. Antq.*, 1913, June, p. 162) that in the recent Mandasor Inscription the epithet “सिंह-मविक्रान्तगामिनि,” applied to Naravarman, suggests that he was a feudatory prince of Chandragupta II, for we know from a survey of the Gupta coins that सिंह-म विक्रम was a title of Chandragupta II and the Sanchi Inscription of G. E. 93 (411 A.D.) tells us that Chandragupta II was reigning till that time. That Visnavarman, the son, and Bandhuvvarman, the grandson, of Naravarman were subordinate to Kumaragupta is known from the Mandasor Inscription of Kumaragupta and Bandhuvvarman.”² Mr. Bhattacharya goes on to point out that, if we identify Chandra of Meharauli with Chandravarman of Pushkarana, there is one difficulty. We know that the pillar record was engraved after Chandia’s death, probably by his successor. “Evidently this successor would be either his (younger) brother Naravarman or his nephew Visnavarman. But we have already

¹ See p. 807, footnote. “M. M. Haraprasad Shastri seems to be right in identifying Chandra of the Iron pillar with Chandravarman, King of Pushkarana, Rajputana, who was contemporary with Samudragupta, and was brother of Naravarman (Mandasor inscr. of V. S. 401 = A. D. 404-5).”

² E.g. The inscription says (Fleet’s *Gupta Inscriptions*, p. 82)

चतुस्समुद्रान्तविलोलमेखलां सुमेरुकैलासवृद्धतपोधरां ।

वनान्तवान्तस्फुटपुष्पहासिनी कुमारगुप्ते पृथ्वी प्रशासति ॥

. बभूव गोप्ता नृप विश्ववर्मा ॥

seen that Naravarman was a feudatory of the Guptas, and so was Visnivarman. Is it probable that these subordinate kings should ever have ventured to publish a eulogy on their departed brother or uncle in such glowing terms as we actually find in the text of Meharauli Pillar, attributing to him not only the conquest of Bengal and Balkh but the sovereignty of the whole world, at a time when their lords, the Guptas, were in the zenith of their power? It is to be remembered, supposing that both the Meharauli and the Susuniya Inscriptions refer to the same king, that the Delhi inscription was written after quite a long time after the publication of the Susuniya record. The latter had been published before the campaigns of Samudragupta commenced, while the former was issued long after that event, for it speaks of a very long reign of Chandia and moreover the record was inscribed after Chandia's death. The date of the Meharauli Pillar inscription must then coincide roughly with the latter part of Samudragupta's reign or more probably with the earlier portion of Chandragupta II's reign. Both Samudragupta (after his conquest) and Chandragupta II were powerful monarchs. Was it possible for a subordinate king, whoever he might be, to speak of a deceased monarch in such extravagant terms of praise in the life-time of the Gupta Emperors? We believe it hardly possible. We are afraid Mr Sastri's identification is open to grave doubts. Mr Bhattacharya would therefore accept the identification with Chandragupta II. It "would save unnecessary trouble." It is also 'reasonable' and 'consistent with palæographical evidence', though the wording of the Pillar record is widely different from the ordinary formula of the Gupta Inscription.

Just at the time when Mr Bhattacharya was writing about the convenience, the reasonableness and the palæographical basis of Chandia's identification with Chandragupta, Mr Allan of the British Museum¹ made an adverse decision on these very grounds. He doubted the identity with Chandragupta II for these reasons: (1) The phraseology of the inscription is quite unlike that of any Gupta inscriptions. (2) No genealogy is given. (3) There is reason to believe that the king's name was not Chandra at all, but Chandra-dhava. (4) The epithet *Paramabhagavata* was so definite a title of Chandragupta II that its absence in the present inscription should be regarded as a proof against identifying the two. (5) The epithet *Aikadhinayya* would, though more appropriate to Chandragupta II than to Chandragupta I.

¹ Catalogue of the Gupta coins, pp xxxvi to xxxviii in the Introduction.

be still more suitable to Samudragupta (6) The fact that the inscription is engraved in iron makes it difficult to dogmatise on its date on purely palaeographical grounds "Not only is there no real ground for identifying Chandra with Chandragupta II, but it is improbable that the inscription belongs to the dynasty at all, when the true explanation is discovered it will probably be found that Fleet is right in emphasizing the early character of its epigraphy"

Subsequently, however, the identification of Chandra with Chandragupta I was revived by two scholars, Mr. Basak and Dr. S. K. Aiyangar¹ of the Madras University These drew attention to the *Aikadhināja* of both the sovereigns and argued on that ground the plausibility of identification The latter of these scholars further laid down the theory that the assumption of the right to perform *asvamedha* and the acceptance of the title of *Maharajadhināja* by Samudragupta, the son and successor of Chandragupta I, while there was the dropping of these two epithets of imperial significance by Rudrasena I, the contemporary Vakataka king of the Dakkan, proves a transfer of imperial power from the Vakatakas to the Guptas in the time of Chandragupta I and that the details of the conquest of Vangas and Bahlikas given in the iron pillar inscription must be attributed to the imperialistic achievement of Chandragupta I The Bahlikas were on the other side of the Indus and the progress of Chandragupta against them would have meant a victorious rivalry with the Vakatakas in regard to the possession of the lands under the western Kshatrapas, and their kinsmen across the frontier of their territory.

Mr. Hemchandra Ray Chaudhuri of the Calcutta University was at this stage the author of a new theory which we may call the Naga theory² He points out that Samudragupta later on conquered the chiefs of Aryavarta known as Rudradeva, Matila, Nagadatta, Chandravarman, Ganapati Naga, Nagasena, Achyuta, Nandi, and Balavarman, besides capturing the scion of the family of Kota and making all kings of the forest countries his servants. Mr. Chaudhuri, after referring to H. P. Sastri's views already described, criticised it in these words "It should, however, be

¹ See *Studies in Gupta History* printed as 'University Supplement' in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Vol. VI, pt. II, Serial No. 17 for August 1927. It is a reprint of earlier articles on the subject, and contains much unnecessary repetition. The 61 pages could have been reduced to 35 pages by avoiding repetitions. For the present article see *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 46, p. 93 ff.

² See H. P. *Political History of Ancient India*, 1923, pp. 272-274.

¹ The passage referred to by Mr. Jay Chaudhri is

नृपान् वैदिशकाश्चापि भविष्यास्तु निवांघत ।
शेषस्य नागराजस्य पुत्रः परपुरञ्जयः ॥
भोगी भविष्यते राजा नृपो नागकुलोद्भवः ।
सदाचन्द्रस्तु चन्द्राशो द्वितीयो नखवास्तथा ॥
वनवर्मा ततश्चापि चतुर्थो वङ्गरः स्मृतः ।
भूतिनन्दस्ततश्चापि वैदिपेतु भविष्यति ॥

The puranas at this stage pass on to "the Sungas" and the rulers Sisunandi, Nandis, etc. till they were followed by Vindhya sakti.

² An authorised summary of the lectures was published in the *Hindu* of February 13 and February 24, 1928.

be still period. But the wording of the pillar record differs so insensibly from the ordinary formula of the Gupta inscriptions and the phraseology is quite unlike that of any of their numerous inscriptions, as has been noted by Vincent Smith. Mr Allan states that, as the inscription was engraved on an iron pillar, considering the stiffness of the material on which the inscription was engraved, it would be difficult to dogmatise on its date from the standpoint of epigraphy, and even went so far as to doubt if the inscription belonged to the Gupta dynasty at all. He was, however, unable to offer any constructive solution." Mr Venkata-rama Aiyar then argues thus: "In the Puranas, among the post-Andhra kings, mention is made of one Sada-chandria known also as Ramachandra or Vamachandra. He is specifically said to have possessed the beauty of the moon. One is therefore tempted to look here for the mysterious Chandria of the iron pillar. A closer examination tends only to confirm the *prima facie* indication. In the first place, it may be pointed out that the name Sadachandria (Ramachandria or Vamachandra) may as usually take the form *Chandra* as Chandragupta or Chandravarman. Sadachandria succeeded the Naga king, Bhogin, according to the Puranas, who exalted the Naga family and ruled from Vidisa. This Bhogin is perhaps no other than the famous Bhavanaga (of the inscriptions). Whatever be the validity of the suggested identification of Bhogin with Bhavanaga, the Puranas make it clear that Sadachandra supplanted the Naga family in their height of prosperity and succeeded to their rich heritage over the Gangetic region. The *Puranas* also mention that Sadachandra and his four successors belonged to the Anga¹ family (Anga being a better reading than Sunga from the standpoint of history, as will be seen in the sequel). It is therefore probable that Sadachandra came from Anga and his territory extended from Anga to Vidisa. Moreover, it is more natural for a king of Anga (Bhagalpur) than for a king of Pataliputra or Pushkarana to have gone on a war to Vanga on the outskirts of his own dominions against the Naga enemies who might have challenged his newly acquired supremacy. Again, the fourth member of the Anga family is known as Vangara, so named perhaps after the conquest of Vanga. From the *Mahabharata* (III, 103), the *Ramayana* (II, 68, 18), the *Harivamsa*

¹ The *Puranas* use the term *Sungas* as though reverting, after the description of Vidisa Nagas, to another line from the Sungas onward, but Mr A. V. V. corrects Sungas into Angas and makes the Anga and Vidisa families closely connected with each other or rather identical.

(XXXI, 5) and the *Vishnupurana* (XCIX, 102), it is quite clear that the Vishnupadagiri was regarded as particularly sacred to Lord Vishnu from a very early period. The *Mahabharata* (XII, 79) informs that King Anga, the founder of the Anga family, offered a sacrifice in Vishnupadagiri with which even Indra was pleased. It is therefore doubly appropriate that Chandra, a Vishnu devotee, who had supplanted the Suva family of Nagas and a descendant of Anga should have chosen this lofty site as the fitting place to erect a pillar in honour of Vishnu. Lastly, it is far more natural for a king of Vidisa (Bhilsa) rather than for a king of Pataliputra to have marched against the Bahlikas so far west on the other side of the Indus."

Reviewing his theory in the second of his lectures he reiterates his arguments thus — "(1) Chandra being an integral part of the name, Sadachandra or Vamachandra could easily be rendered into Chandra. (2) The Sadachandra of the Puranas is specifically said to have possessed the beauty of the moon, and thus answers exactly to the description of Chandra in the iron pillar inscriptions. (3) Being a member of the Anga family, whose dominions extended from Anga to Vidisa, it is more natural for him to have defeated the Naga enemies in the neighbouring Vanga country, on the outskirts of his own dominions, when his newly-acquired supremacy was perhaps challenged by them. (4) It is not without some significance that one member of the Anga family is known as Vangara, perhaps after Vanga conquest. (5) Sadachandra of Vidisa was more centrally situated to effect the double conquest over Vanga in the east and the Bahlikas in the west, rather than Chandragupta I or II or Skandagupta or Chandravarman of Pushkara and the Susunija rock inscription. (6) As a devotee of Vishnu and as one who overthrew the Bharasiva (Lingayat) Saivite family of the Nagas, and as a descendant of King Anga, who performed a great sacrifice at Vishnupadagiri, with which even Indra was pleased, it is trebly appropriate that Chandra should have erected the lofty standard of Vishnu on Vishnupadagiri. (7) Numerous coins bearing the name Chandra have been found in Padmavati (Narwar in Gwalior) and in Vidisa. These have been wrongly attributed to Chandragupta I or II by Drs. Cunningham, Smith and Allan. But from the find-spots, it is more natural to attribute them to Sadachandra of the Anga family, who ruled from Vidisa after subverting the Nagas. (8) Chronologically also there can be no serious difficulty, and even from the standpoint of palæography or epigraphy, in accepting this new solution, for Sadachandra is placed in the Puranas

between Vindhyaśakti and Pravarasena I, and we also know that he succeeded Bhogin, perhaps Bhavanaga of the Puranas, the contemporary of Pravarasena I, and he is thus not far removed in time from the early Guptas." After referring to the negative arguments in his favour, *viz*, the phraseology of the pillar inscription, the inadvisability of dogmatism on the date of an epigraph carved in a stiff material and the tentativeness of the suggestions of previous writers, he concludes "Thus it is contended that the Chandra of the Lion Pillar inscription is neither Chandragupta I or II, nor Chandravarma of Pushkarana and of the Susuniya rock inscription, but he is the Sadachandra or Vamachandra of the Puranas, the political founder of the Anga family who, after supplanting the Nagas of Vidisa, inflicted a crushing defeat on them in Vanga, where they challenged his supremacy, and crossed the seven mouths of the Sindhu to stop the tide of Bahlika invasion and erected a lofty standard of Vishnu on the sacred tirtha of Vishnupadagiri."

Dr Krishnaswami Aiyangar subjected these conclusions to a detailed scrutiny in the columns of the *Hindu* (April 11, 1928). He first of all showed a chronological incompatibility in the identification of Sadachandra with Chandra of Meharauli. Bhavanaga was the father-in-law of Vakataka Rudrasena I. This Rudrasena was contemporary with Chandragupta I. Sadachandra, as Bhavanaga's successor, must have therefore have come to power *after* Chandragupta I. He must therefore have been the contemporary of Samudragupta or Rudrasena I (or even his son Prithivisena). This conclusion would be inconsistent with a pre-Gupta or early Gupta date assigned to him. Secondly, the Puranas refer to Sadachandra only by name and do not indicate any greatness in him. The mere attribute *Chandrabha* or (*Chandrāmsa*), which is a formula, cannot prove identity. Thirdly, a man whose name was Ramachandra is not likely to call himself Chandra, leaving the more important part of it, though in the case of the readings Sadachandra and Vamachandra the epithets might have been left out. Fourthly, much importance need not be attached to the argument of the non-Gupta character of the phraseology of the inscription. "The Gupta inscriptions that we have from which anything like a formula can be made out are all of them of Chandragupta II or later. The famous Harisena epigraph of Samudragupta itself does not conform to this formula. All of Chandragupta II's inscriptions so far accessible to us do not conform to this dictum. It would therefore be too much to speak of Gupta formula in inscriptions of Samudragupta's time

and previously Of peculiarity in phraseology really so-called there is none In point of general literary character, it strikes us that it differs no more from other well-known records of Kumargupta or Skandagupta " Fifthly, when Mr Allan said that much importance should not be attached to palaeography, he did not mean that it should be entirely given up What he meant was that the inscription could palaeographically be attributed to a little earlier or a little later period and not dogmatically to the period of one sovereign alone like Chandragupta II Sixthly, If Sadachandra was the successor of Bhavanaga he must be contemporary with Samudragupta Such a contemporaneity cannot be believed on various grounds, political and geographical. As Sadachandra ruled over Vidisa and Eastern Malwa, he must have, if Mr Venkatarama Aiyar's contentions were true, come to the throne either when Samudragupta or his father Chandragupta was ruling In order to fight against his enemies in Bengal he must have gone across Magadha which was then under the Gupta Rule That would be impossible To make it possible, Mr Venkatarama Aiyar believed that the original territory of Sadachandra was Anga and that Vidisa was a new acquisition from the Nagas or rather from Bhavanaga whom he overthrew This would equally necessitate Sadachandra's possession of Magadha, which is of course impossible Further, the puranic statement refers not to Anga but Sunga To change Sunga into Anga, as Mr Venkatarama Aiyar does, is unwarranted The assumption that an Anga ruler extended his territory across Magadha and conquered Vidisa from the Nagas is an assumption for which there is no evidence "The assumption seems historically not warranted, and geographically not easy, and if the Gupta-Vakataka synchronism be accepted, it becomes chronologically impossible. If a ruler of Pushkariana is far from fighting against enemies on the Bengal frontier, a ruler of Anga is in no better case to fight with the enemies across the seven mouths of the Sindhu " Further, the Naga dynasty, we have reasons to believe, did not become extinct at Vidisa as Mr Venkatarama Aiyar seems to believe There was apparently only a change of king There was no dynastic change at all With regard to Vishnupadagiri pillar, again, there is no evidence to show that it was brought from elsewhere at all

On these grounds Mr Krishnaswami Aiyangar considers the Sadachandra theory to be untenable He reiterates his own view in favour of Chandragupta I. Chandra of Meharauli was an empire-builder. He fought against Bengal in the east and

beyond Sind in the west Sadachandria of Vidisa is treated in the puranas in too obscure a manner to be such an emperor. Again, it could not be Chandragupta II for the inscriptions of the latter do not refer to the Bahlikas, though the achievement itself is not intrinsically impossible. In regard to Chandravarman of Pushkarana, it may be that there was a raid across the Gupta territory in the early period of Samudragupta's reign which was one of grave disturbances, but "the inscription of his successor Naravarman makes no mention of such a great achievement, which it would hardly have failed to do if he were the person" Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar thus concludes "That Chandragupta I of the Guptas built the empire is beyond doubt. That he was anxious for a suitable successor to bear the burdens of this empire is stated in clear terms in Harisena epigraph. We have statements that the marriage with the Lichchhavi princess was of great importance, and that he made that a stepping stone to the foundation of a great kingdom is quite possible or even probable. We have good reasons to feel that some of the coins usually ascribed to his successors, such as the Chhatra coins and the marriage coins, are coins issued by Chandragupta I. It is these circumstances of a definite character that give room for the assumption that it was possibly Chandragupta I that put up the Mehrauli Pillar record, the record being named, as is usual with the epigraphists, from the locality of its finds.

"It would be quite in the nature of things in regard to the newly founded empire if its feudatories attempted to throw off the yoke immediately after the death of the founder. If the succession happens to be an indisputable one and the successor a capable man, the empire would stand, if the succession itself is disputed and the successor a feeble individual, the empire breaks up. In the case of Samudragupta what happened actually as stated in the Harisena epigraph is nothing more than this — Samudragupta was chosen for the succession by the father as the most eligible every way in the actual circumstances. There are hints of those that felt dissatisfied at the choice. Immediately follows the statement that a number of chieftains in the immediate neighbourhood, rulers of separate kingdoms, made a concerted attack on Patalipura and Samudragupta overthrew the enemies. His drastic uprooting of the nine rulers of *Aryavarta* follows as a consequence, naturally as night follows the day. From these circumstances alone the inference would be justifiable that Chandragupta I successfully founded the empire, which in great anxiety he left to a successor of his choice, who justified the

choice by overcoming all opposition and put the empire on a firmer basis than his father had left it. Is not that Chandragupta a man of achievement and does he not seem the likely man to be identified with the Chandra of the Meharauli Pillar inscription ? ”.

V

Thus there are at least five theories in regard to the identification of Chandra of the iron pillar, *viz*, (1) Chandragupta I of the Gupta Empire, (2) Chandravarman of Pushkarana and Susūniya, (3) Chandragupta II, the Gupta Emperor, (4) Sadachandra of Vidisa and (5) Chandrasa of Vidisa. Of these the case of Chandragupta II seems to have been thrown into the back-ground in a definite manner. With regard to the other cases, it is difficult to say which is the strongest. The palæographical arguments are in favour of all. One additional argument in favour of Chandragupta I is the imperial title. But the arguments against him are (1) the lack of Gupta genealogy and of dynastic panegyrics in the Meharauli inscription (2) the conquest by Samudragupta and Chandragupta II of the same area, which would be unnecessary in case Chandragupta I had already established the Empire. It would be certainly curious, if we identify Chandra with Chandragupta I, that Samudragupta published such a bald and matter of fact epigraph, referring to “a certain king Chandra”. Except for the reference to the actual achievement, there seems to be an implication of comparative obscurity in the case of Chandra of Meharauli. With regard to Chandravarman, the contemporary of Samudragupta, there is one difficulty. In order to possess both Pokarna and Susūniya, he must have occupied the Gupta territory ruled by Chandragupta I. This is regarded by some as improbable. But it is quite possible that, as Samudragupta was not the first son and as there was some trouble which led to his campaigns in the west, there was a temporary raid on the part of Chandravarman from Pokarna as far as Vanga. Further, Chandravarman's position in Rajputana would have easily enabled him to go against the Bahlikas. The original site of the iron pillar, again, has been surmised to be Mathura. The arguments on behalf of Chandravarman seem therefore to be stronger than those on behalf of others. With regard to the Sadachandra theory of Mr A V Venkatarama Aiyar there are serious objections. Mr Venkatarama Aiyar does not understand the fact that Sadachandra himself is regarded by the Puranas as one of the Nagas and not their enemy. His contention that he was connected with the Anga line is

unwarranted and speculative. It is made after correcting *Sungas* into *Angas* in the Puranic text, for which there is no warrant. Further, all his arguments can be equally applied to the kings of Vidisa and it is unnecessary to drag in the connection with Anga. It would have been more easy for a man of Vidisa to go both as far as Vanga and beyond the Indus than for a man of Anga to do it. Mr Venkatarama Aiyar has tried too much in connecting Sadachandra with Anga and making him an enemy of the Nagas. In doing this he has become guilty of the chronological and other inconsistencies which Dr. Krishnasami Aiyangar rightly charges him with. Sadachandra is mentioned as a fugitive ruler. He was *not* a conqueror of the Nagas. He had no connection with Anga. The interpretation of Vanga is far-fetched. I would have no objection to identify the Chandra of the lion pillar inscription with Sadachandra of Vidisa, but with two important reservations, namely, (1) that he was a Naga and (2) that he need not have been connected with Anga. His campaigns at the close of the 3rd century A.D. might have extended as far as Vanga on the one hand and Bahlika on the other without any such connection. As regards Chandramsa, Mr Ray Chaudhuri differentiates him from Sadachandra and holds him to be Chandra of Meharauli, while Mr Venkatarama Aiyar regards both as one and the same king. I am disposed to agree with the latter in this respect. The Puranic text does not seem to refer to two kings. There is no doubt of Naga rule in the Jumna region and Central India in the 3rd century, and Chandramsa might have been the head of a Naga confederacy. All that we can therefore say at the present moment is that Chandra of Meharauli was a Naga chief who established a temporary empire about the close of the third century or beginning of the 4th century. He was in all probability the king of Vidisa and originally erected his pillar somewhere in Madhuia from which it was probably removed to Delhi by Anangapala later on. It is very probable that this chief was a contemporary of Chandragupta's predecessors, Gupta and Ghatotkacha. It will be seen also from this conclusion that Chandragupta I was not the Chandra of the Meharauli Pillar.

VI

The Gupta Era

Another question which has given rise to a great controversy in connection with Chandragupta I is whether he was the actual founder of the Era which has been generally called after the

Gupta dynasty. All the coins and records of the Gupta monarchs are dated in a particular era. They supply years 82-95 for Chandragupta II, 96-130 for Kumaragupta I, 130-149 for Skandagupta, and 165-175 (possibly 180) for Buddhagupta and so on. The coins give in addition to these dates the secondary names of the kings. It is from these data that the history of the dynasty has been constructed. Now the question is who founded the era? In answering this, one fact has to be remembered, namely, there is no contemporary record to say distinctly that it was founded by the Guptas. The only two authorities that can be regarded as favouring such a view are the famous Mohamedan scholar of the 11th century, Alberuni, who speaks of the *Gupta-kala* just as he speaks of the *Saka-kala*, and Dr. Bhau Daji who sought to find the expression *Guptasya kalat* in line 15 of the rock inscription of Skandagupta at Junagadh and therefore spoke of the establishment of the era by the Guptas. But Alberuni's exact meaning has, as will be shown presently, given rise to serious doubts and discussions, and with regard to Dr. Bhau Daji's contention, Dr. Fleet has pointed out that the original is not *Guptasya kalat gananam vidhaya* (counting from the era of Gupta) but *Gupta-prakale-gananam-vidhaya* (making the calculation in the reckoning of the Guptas). He has further pointed out that Maharaja Gupta, the founder of the dynasty, being only a feudatory, could not have been powerful enough to establish an era at all. The real meaning of *Gupta-prakale*, he opined, was simply the time of the Guptas, not necessarily the era established by a particular Gupta monarch. In any case, he held, there was no direct evidence to that effect, though at the same time there was no evidence against it. It is true, he himself used the expression *Gupta era* (which in later days was also the Valabhi era) in his works, but he used it not in the sense that it was actually established by a Gupta king but in the sense that people came to reckon from the accession of a Gupta king.

When did the first year of the Gupta era commence then? Regarding the answer to this, there has been considerable difference of opinion. Alberuni who refers to the popular employment of the eras of Harsha, Vikramaditya, Saka, Vallabha (i.e. Valabhi) and of the Gupta, says that the era of Vallabha (also spelt Balabha), "falls 241 years later than the epoch of the Saka era." Alberuni then explains himself thus: "People use it in this way. They first put down the year of saka-kala and then subtract from it the cube of 6 and the square of 5 (216 plus 25 equal to 241). The remainder is the year of the Balabha era." As regards the

Gupta-kala, he continues, people said that when the wicked and powerful Guptas ceased to exist, this date was used as the epoch of an era. He then adds "Balabha followed the Guptas immediately, for the era of the Gupta also commences in the year 241 of the era of saka." A French scholar (M. Renaud) translated this passage to mean that the Valabhi era of saka 241 was identical with the *extirpation* of the Guptas. Prof Sachau supported this interpretation. But later scholars have rightly interpreted Alberuni to the effect that, on the extinction of the Guptas, the Valabhis *continued their era* in the Valabhi kingdom. Fergusson was one of the first scholars to point out that the Gupta era, which afterwards became the Valabhi era, could not have referred to the *downfall* of the former. He took 318 A.D. for the date of the Gupta *rise* of the dynasty as well as the establishment of the era, and further held that this particular year was chosen not because of the accession of any particular king or the occurrence of any particular event but because of an adaptation of the old 60-year cycle of Jupiter from the commencement of the Saka Era for the sake of comparison.

The school that held the theory of the commencement of the Valabhi era from the *downfall* of the Guptas had naturally to give an earlier period for the *rise* of the Gupta dynasty. With regard to this, however, there arose considerable difference of opinion. One view was that the rise of the Gupta dynasty must be attributed to the Saka era of 77-78 A.D. Mr Thomas who ventilated this view had his own theory of the Saka and Indo-Scythian kings and, as a result of that, put the Guptas to the period from 78 A.D. to 318 A.D. A second view, that of Sir Alexander Cunningham,¹ was that the Gupta rule commenced in 195-96 A.D., which he subsequently gave up in favour of 166-67 A.D. He added that the era used by the Valabhi kings was that of the Guptas, in consequence of the probable circumstance that the Senapati Bhatarka was the governor of Saurashtra during the last two years of the reign of Skandagupta. A third scholar,

¹ Cunningham's view underwent so many changes in this respect that we can take it as a typical example of the tentativeness of many Indian chronological investigations. His original views were that the theory of the commencement of an epoch with the extirpation of a dynasty was absurd and that 318-9 should mark a settlement and not downfall. But he gave up this sound view on account of the influence of Thomas. In 1903 he accepted the theory of Gupta extirpation in 319 and of the Gupta elevation in 78 A.D. In 1907 he changed this in favour of 195-16 A.D. He then indulged in much speculation based upon the number of years given in the grants of Vialakara Hasti (121) and Sankaraditya etc., and concluded that the *Valabhi Era* began in A.D. 319. It is unnecessary to repeat the numerous speculations of different writers on the subject. An exhaustive summary is given in Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions*.

Sir E. Clive Bayley fixed the Gupta era in 189-90 or 190-91. As regards 319, he suggested that it probably marked the death of Kumaragupta and a rebellion against the Skandagupta by the Valabhis. Bayley based his theory on the numerals contained in some coins of the Hindu kings of Kabul, in the interpretation of which however he has not been supported by anybody.

Different scholars belonged to one or other of the above two schools, *i.e.*, the school which dated the rise of the Guptas in 319 and the school which dated the fall of the Guptas in that year and therefore assigned some earlier date for their rise. The discussions of these are very confusing on account of the differences of the authors regarding the Gupta genealogy, the relation of the Guptas towards the other dynasties, particularly the Valabhis, and similar matters. It is not surprising that, in the midst of these discussions, we find the Valabhi charters assigned by some to the Vikrama era, by others to the Saka era, and so on. We also find the records of the Guptas themselves attributed by one scholar to the Vikrama era. Dr. Hall claimed to have discovered a new epoch of the Guptas commencing in 278 A.D. He was one of those who held that the Valabhi kings dated their reigns in the Vikrama Samvatsara. Dr. Bhau Daji put the Gupta era in 319 but regarded the Valabhi dates as based on the Saka era, stating that Kumaragupta and Skandagupta succeeded the last of the kings of Valabhi. He held "that the Valabhi era of Alberuni, if identical with the Gupta era, was certainly not the era used by the kings of Valabhi themselves, but was the Gupta era, introduced into Kathiawad by Kumaragupta and Skandagupta." Incidentally, in order to fortify his conclusions he found fault with the date assigned to Hieun Tsang and said that it must have taken place 60 years earlier! R. G. Bhandarkar, Rajendralal Mitra, Thomas, Buhler, Fergusson, Oldenburg, Hoernle and numerous other scholars contributed to this bewildering controversy. Rajendralal Mitra regarded the Gupta dates as Saka ones and the Valabhi era as marking Gupta extermination. Dr. Buhler argued in favour of a Valabhi era in 200 A.D. Fergusson (1880), Oldenburg (1881), and R. G. Bhandarkar (1884), on the whole approached the theory enunciated by Dr. Fleet in 1885 in favour of the commencement of the era in 319 A.D. It is true that Dr. Hoernle concluded in 1885 that "the terminal date" A.D. 319, "of the Gupta empire, as determined by Mr. Thomas, may now be considered as one of these great historical land-marks, the truth of which is admittedly no more open to question," and (Id. 113) that General Cunningham's theory of A.D. 166-67 for the epoch

of the Gupta era, "has every prospect of ultimately meeting with universal assent, and being the final verdict of the historic researches regarding the Gupta dynasty" In spite of this dictum, Dr Hoernle is not supported by present day scholars The view of Dr Fleet is now unanimously accepted, and that is the Gupta Era, which was an adaptation of the Saka year beginning with *Chaitra Sukla* I, began between February 26, A D 320 and March 13, A D 321 In other words, the Gupta year is the current Christian year *minus* 319 The erudition displayed by Dr Fleet in arriving at this conclusion is a monument of comparative epigraphical studies Even after Fleet's conclusion, speculation continued till it was set at rest by the synchronism of Samudragupta with king Meghavarna of Ceylon (352-79) established by M. Sylvain Levi A recent attempt has been made by Mr. Shamasastri of Mysore to fix the Gupta Era in 200-1 on the basis of Jaina traditions, but this can be hardly taken seriously The services of Dr Fleet (who was followed by Vincent Smith, in *Indian Antiquary* 1902) in bringing order out of chaos in regard to Gupta chronology can hardly be overestimated

VII

We may now assume that the Gupta Era marked either the accession or coronation of Chandragupta I. It might have also begun with his assumption of the title of *Maharajadhiraja* The analogy of Harsha seems to indicate that it began with his accession If he came to the throne in 319-20 he must have been for some time a mere *Maharaja*. He could have become a *Maharajadhiraja* only after a few years of conquest How many years should be allotted for this can be only a surmise If we suppose that by 325 A D. he came to wield imperial titles, we may suppose that he ruled for a space of five or ten years after it Vincent Smith would place the end of his rule in 330 and Dr Fleet in 335 Either date, it should be obvious from the previous discussions, is acceptable It may be added here that, if we suppose that the year 319-20 refers to the advent of the era of imperialism, Chandragupta must be surmised to have been a mere *Maharaja* for a few years—Allan would suggest ten—say from 310 to 320 In this case, the regnal dates of the two first Guptas should be ante-dated a little Considering all circumstances, it seems to me that Fleet's date is the most acceptable.

It should be incidentally inferred that at the time when Chandiagupta's reign ended, the Vakatakas were ruled by Rudrasena I, the grandson and successor of Pravarasena. It might be that the latter died only a few years after the rise of Chandragupta. Further south, in later Mysore, the Kadambas and the Gangas were just emerging into power. Still further south, the Pallavas were already ruling over the Tamil country from Conjeeveram to Amaravati.

V RANGACHARYA



Expansion of the Gupta Empire

BY PROF V. RANGACHARYA

About the year 335 A D the founder of the Gupta Empire, Chandra-Gupta I, died, leaving a small territory extending along the Ganges from the borders of modern Bihar to the confines of Oudh. During the next hundred years, this small area was the nucleus of an empire which extended over the major portion of Hindustan and which rendered everlasting service to Hindu culture and civilization. During these 100 years, three great sovereigns—Samudragupta, Chandragupta Vikramaditya I, and Kumaragupta—wielded the destinies of the empire and, we may add, of Hinduism. At the end of this period, about the beginning of the latter part of the 5th century, the magnificent empire over which these sovereigns ruled began to decline for various reasons; and though the dynasty continued to hold power for nearly two centuries after it, the greatness of the empire had become a mere memory. In the present article and the next, the progress of the empire is rapidly traced.

SAMUDRAGUPTA (*Circa 335-80*)

The immediate successor of Chandra-Gupta I was his son Samudragupta. From the expression '*tatparigrahitah*' found in almost every inscription referring to Samudragupta, and from the express statement that his father was specially delighted at his achievements as a prince, we have reasons to believe that Samudragupta was not the eldest son, but selected from among several brothers by his father for the crown, in recognition of his valour and distinction. It has also been suggested that the expression '*Samudragupta*' was a later imperial title assumed by the new monarch and that his earlier name was 'Kacha'. A number of coins bear-

ing the name 'Kacha' and exactly resembling the 'Archer' type of coins in legends, designs and scripts, issued by Samudragupta, are believed to indicate this identity. Very probably, as Alan suggests, Kacha adopted the imperial title of 'Samudragupta' after his conquests, the ending *Gupta* having been adopted in imitation of his father's name. In this case, what had been originally a mere accidental or clan designation, became a proud imperial one.

It may be pointed out here that it has been suggested by Dr Hoernle that a Maharajadhiraja Sri Dharmaditya who figures in an inscription at Faridpur¹ in East Bengal was also Samudragupta, the title being analogous to '*Vikramaditya*' wielded by his successor. The arguments in favour of this view are (1) the appropriateness of the title when applied to Samudragupta who is always described as a great '*dharmika*' and master of the '*sastra-tattvartha*', and (2) the use of the epithet '*apratirathah*', but it is now agreed that the identification cannot stand. Mr Alan points out that the seal of the Faridpur inscription—the '*abhisheka*' of Lakshmi, indicates a later dynasty and date. He further infers, from the analogy of later reigns, that the epithet '*parakramaditya*' would be more suitable to Samudragupta than '*dharmaditya*'. Above all, Dr Hoernle himself² later on preferred to attribute the inscription to Yasodharman. We may therefore conclude that Samudragupta was quite distinct from *Dharmaditya*. With regard to the duration of Samudragupta's reign, we have already seen that Chandra-Gupta I was on the throne till perhaps about 335. Samudragupta, we know, was on the throne for a considerable period. The terminal dates assigned¹ to him vary from 375 to 385. Vincent Smith has argued that Chandra-Gupta's marriage with the Lichchhavi princess took place

¹ See *Ind. Antq.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 43-44. Dr Hoernle gives the example of *va* and *sha* to show the early date of the inscription, which resembles Gupta records in its beginning. It records a gift of land to Somasvamin of the Lauhitya-gotra and Vajasaneya-Sakha by a Vasudevasvamin for erecting apparently a *dharmasala*.

² *J. R. A. S.*, 1909, p. 136.

probably about 308 A.D , in which case we may suppose that Samudragupta was less than 27 years of age when he came to the throne. However it might be, there is no doubt that Samudragupta had a long reign of nearly fifty years, during which period he made himself the greatest emperor of the period. We may attribute the end of his reign to between 380 and 385.

SAMUDRAGUPTA'S INSCRIPTIONS

The history of Samudragupta's reign has been entirely constructed from inscriptions and coins. One of the greatest figures in Indian history owes his name thus to modern research in entirety. Of the inscriptions, two only are available, directly concerning him¹. The first of these is a posthumous record and inscribed on a pillar at Allahabad, which was discovered in 1834. The column is 35 feet in height and as old as the 3rd century B.C., for it also contains an edict of Asoka. It is now a conspicuous monument in the Allahabad fort. From the fact that the Asokan edict is addressed to the rulers at Kausambi, it has been suggested by Cunningham that the pillar was originally at Kausambi and later on removed to Allahabad, just as the Asokan columns at Merut and Sewalik hills were removed in Mahomedan times to Delhi. If this were the case, the removal must have taken place after the 7th century; for Hiouen-Tsang, who was for such a long time at Allahabad, does not mention the column there. It is possible, however, to argue that it might have been omitted by him. The Gupta inscription is in the North Indian alphabet of the 4th century A.D., and of course in Sanskrit. It is not dated, but it describes Samudragupta, whom it panegyrises, as already dead. It was evidently, therefore, issued by his son and successor Chandra-Gupta II. The inscription is one of the most unique and valuable records in Indian history, for it gives a detailed list of the countries and peoples conquered by the emperor. The list

¹ Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions*, Nos I and II A

is neither chronological nor geographical, but there is some scheme in the arrangement which, as will be shown presently, is very instructive in regard to the character and constitution of the Gupta Empire. The record, moreover, is a *kavya* by itself and, as pointed out by Buhler¹, is one of the earliest examples of the style in which Kalidasa was a past master. The author of the *prasasti* was Harisena, who was by no means a mean poet.

The other inscription of Samudragupta is that of Eran, ancient Arikina, a village in Sagar District, Central Provinces. This record, which is unfortunately fragmentary, belonged to a local Varaha temple. It is in the Southern style of alphabet,—the box-headed style, as it is generally called. It also is in Sanskrit. The portion naming the monarch is spoiled, but from the terms of eulogy, we can easily identify him with Samudragupta. The record refers to Arikina as the city of his delight, and apparently commemorates the erection of the Varaha temple. As has been already said, Samudragupta's name is not available, but the record is exactly like Harisena's Allahabad *prasasti*. It has been suggested that the lavish distribution of gold referred to in it indicates the performance of the Asvamedha sacrifice and the engraving of the inscription at the end of the reign. In lines 12, 13 and 17, we have references to Samudragupta's conquest of all kings of the earth and his provision, by his own valour, of a dowry for his queen.

Mention should be made here of a spurious inscription of Samudragupta which was discovered at Gaya in 1883. This inscription² is now regarded as a forgery of about the 8th century A.D., though the seal (which contains the figure of a 'garuda' with outstretched wings and a legend in five lines read as 'Samudraguptah') is a genuine one. This record was issued from the royal camp at the city of Ayodhya.

It purports to be dated in the year 9 (328-329 A.D.),

¹ In a Vienna Journal, 1890

² Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions*, No. 60

on the tenth solar day of an unspecified fortnight in the month of 'Vaisakha', that is, in April-May. It gives a brief recital of the genealogy of the dynasty and records the grant to a Brahman (Gopasvamin of the 'Bharadvaja-Gotra' and 'Bahvricha-Sakha') of the 'agrahara' of 'Revatika' in the 'Gaya-Vishaya'. The deed is said to have been written by the order of Dyuta Gopasvamin, the *Akshapataladhikrita*, the officer in charge of legal documents.

It has been already pointed out that the Faridpur inscription of Dharmaditya cannot be attributed to Samudragupta.

SAMUDRAGUPTA'S COINS

Next to inscriptions, coins form the chief materials for the construction of the reign of Samudragupta. Thanks to his great conquests, Samudragupta was able to issue a varied and plentiful currency in gold. There can be no doubt that Samudragupta acquired enormous riches and spoils in the course of his victorious career. There are at least eight types of gold coins (he issued no silver coins) struck by him. The earliest of them, which has been usually styled the 'standard' type, shows the immediate transition from, and imitation of, the Kushana type of coinage. We find in the obverse of this 'standard' type the figure of a standing king as in the Kushan coins. In the presence of the nimbate over the king's head, the close-fitting cap, the coat and trousers, the ear-rings and necklace, the possession of a standard (bound with fillet) by the left hand, the dropping of incense on an altar with the right hand,—in all these we find the Kushan coins imitated. The only change is that, in place of the trident, there appears a 'Garudadhvaja', which is quite natural in a monarch who was a devotee of Vishnu. There is also the figure of a 'garuda' with crescent above it. The reverse of the Gupta coin also reproduces the Kushana symbol of Lakshmi seated on a throne, with a nimbate over her head and with a loose robe, necklace and armlets. There is a fillet in her

outstretched right hand, and a cornucopia¹ in her left hand. Her feet rest on a lotus, and the whole is surrounded by a border of dots. The Gupta coin is superior in workmanship to the Kushana coin. The 'dhvaja' type of coins has got, besides the above figures, legends both on the obverse and reverse. The obverse contains the expressions *Sva Ityagata* and *Sarvata sata-vrata-vijayo jita-ripurajato diva jagati* in the *upagiti* metre. The reverse contains the legend *Parakramah* (the valiant).

Besides the 'standard' type, Samudragupta issued as many as seven other types of coins. The first of these is known as the 'Archer' type. This became the commonest and most characteristic of the Gupta coins, as it was struck in imitation of Samudragupta, by his successors. It is a natural development of the 'Garudadhvaja' type. The king is standing. There is a nimbate above his head. He is dressed as in the 'standard' coin, but instead of the 'dhvaja' he holds a bow in his left hand and an arrow in the right hand. The head of the bow rests on the ground. The reverse contains the figure of Lakshmi as in the 'standard' type. The legends in the obverse are *Samudra* beneath the left arm and the expression *Apratiratho vijaya bhakti sucharitath dixam jagati* (the unrivalled charioteer, having conquered the earth, conquers heaven), in the *upagiti* metre. The reverse contains the legend *Apratirathah*, (the unrivalled charioteer).

The third type of Samudragupta's coins is usually styled the 'battle-axe' type. Here, in the place of the archer or the standard, there is a battle-axe, *parasu*. In the obverse, the king stands with a nimbate, cap, coat and trousers, ear-rings, neck-lace and sword, and holds a *parasu* (axe) in the left hand. His right hand rests on the hip. To his left, there is a second attendant figure or dwarf, behind whom there is a crescent-shaped standard. The reverse contains the figure

¹ The cornucopia is an ornamental vase (*kalyani*) from which corn, fruit and flower overflow. Lakshmi, is the Goddess of Plenty, is naturally represented with it. The term *cornucopia* means 'the goat's corn' which, is the corn of plenty, figure in the legend of Zeus.

of Lakshmi as in the types already described. The legends in the obverse are (1) *Samudra*, (2) *kr* (*Krtanta*), (3) *Samudragupta* and (4) the expression *krtanta-parasur-jayat-yajita-rajajeta-ajitah* (the deadly axe conquers, the conqueror of invincible kings, the invincible), in *prithvi* metre. The reverse contains the legend *Krtanta-Parasu*. In a variety of this type, the king wears a sword and the boy something like a sword, and the standard has two fluttering ribands at the top.

A fourth type of Samudragupta's coins is the one bearing the name *Kacha*, to which reference had already been made. This is also a development of the 'standard' type. The obverse contains the usual figure of the standing king holding a standard in the left hand and sprinkling incense on an altar with the right hand. There is the legend *Kacha* as well as the expression (*Kacho-gamavajitya-divam-karmabhira-uttamair-jayati*) (*Kacha*, having won over the earth, conquers heaven by the best deeds), in the *upagiti* metre. In the reverse there is, unlike in the coins we have thus far studied, a standing instead of the seated Lakshmi. She wears a loose robe, holds a flower in her right hand and cornucopia in the left. Sometimes she stands on a lotus. There is also the legend 'Sarvarajochchhetta' (the uprooter of all kings).

The fifth type of Samudragupta's coinage is known after the figure of the tiger in it. The king stands wearing a turban, waist cloth, necklace, ear-rings, and armlets, and tramples on a tiger which falls backward on account of his shooting it with a bow in the right hand. The left hand draws the bow back behind the ear. Behind the tiger there is a crescent standard as in the battle-axe coin. The legend in the obverse is 'Vyaghra-parakramah' (valiant like tiger). The reverse contains the figure of a standing Lakshmi or Ganga on a *makara* (elephant-headed fish), wearing ear-rings, necklace, anklets and armlets. She holds a lotus in the left hand, but the right hand is empty and outstretched. There is also a crescent-standard to the left. The legend on the reverse is '*Raja-Samudraguptah*'.

Garuda, Lakshmi and Asvamedha, we find the growing tribute to pauranic Hinduism. The monarch becomes more and more dressed in the orthodox fashion. In the 'tiger' type, he is already seen in waist-cloth and turban. In the 'lyrist' type he is completely Indian in dress, in his cross-legged posture and his play on the 'veena'. In the 'Asvamedha' type, he figures as the complete supporter of the orthodox clergy; for the coins themselves, it has been suggested, were medals made for presentation to them. The scripts, the language, the subject-matter and other details indicate the Gupta pride in all the ideals and practices associated with the '*kshattria-dharma*'

SAMUDRAGUPTA AS DESCRIBED IN INSCRIPTIONS

Before analysing the inscriptional records, it is advisable to see what they say in regard to Samudragupta in general, so that we can understand what sort of man he was. Samudragupta is described in very eloquent terms. He was a world-conqueror, whose fame spread everywhere. He was always accustomed to associate with learned people. He was the supporter of the real scriptural truths. By commanding the collective merits of learned men, he removed obstacles to beautiful poetry. He himself enjoyed, in the world of the wise, supreme fame acquired by poetic composition. He enjoyed the deep affection and regard of his father. His noble nature gave protection to the weak and the distressed. Doers of wrong were humiliated by his powers and made contented and loyal. His building was that of religion. His fame had the witness of the the moon. His wisdom pierced the essential nature of things. As a compound of all virtues, he was a worthy subject of contemplation by the worthy. He was a hero of hundreds of battles, and had a body full of the marks of battle-axes, arrows, spears, pikes, darts, swords, lances, javelins, iron arrows, *vaistavikas* (?) and many other weapons. He restored numerous royal families after conquering them and got from them presents in the form of maidens, 'garuda' tokens, and territories. He rubbed out the

fames of other kings with the soles of his feet. His spirit caused the production of good and the destruction of evil. He could always be won over by devotion and obedience. He was a giver of hundreds of thousands of cows. A glorious personification of kindness, he was ever inspired by the desire to lift up the poor, the miserable, the helpless and the afflicted. He employed his officers in restoring the wealth of the kings conquered by his arms. He was a *Dhanada*, *Varuna*, *Indra* and *Antaka* rolled into one. He put to shame Indra's preceptor and Tumburu and Narada, his sharp and polished intellect, his choral skill and musical accomplishments. He established a claim to the title of *Kaviraja* by composing poetry which could have given subsistence for the learned. He was a mortal only in observing the human duties. Otherwise he was a god. His wealth in elephants, horses, grain and money was endless. He was emperor, 'Paramabhattacharaka', 'Parameswara', 'Maharajadhiraja', 'Apratiratha', the ruler of the sea-girt world. He was in short an ideal monarch.

ANALYSIS OF THE INSCRIPTIONS

We shall now analyse the inscriptional materials, of which the Allahabad pillar *prasasti* is the most indispensable. Though a large portion of the beginning of this inscription is lost, there is enough of it to show that, besides panegyrising the emperor in the terms described above, it gives accurate details of his political conquests and the extent of the empire. It opens with an eloquent description of the qualifications of the young emperor and of his selection as *yuvaraja* by his father in the presence of the whole court. It then proceeds to enumerate his conquests. First, he is said to have uprooted the chiefs Achyuta and Nagasena (line 13). He had him, who was born in the Kota family or dynasty, to be captured by his troops. He delighted, as a result of this, in the city which bore the name of Pushpa (Pushpapura). He then captured and released (line 19).

(1) Mahendra of Kosala, (2) Vyaghraraja of Maha-

kantara; (3) Mantaraja of Kurala, (4) Mahendra of Pishtapura; (5) Svamidatta of Giri-Kouttura, (6) Damana of Erandapalla; (7) Vishnugopa of Kanchi, (8) Nila-rajā of Avamukta, (9) Hastivarma of Vengi, (10) Ugrasena of Palakka; (11) Kubera of Devarashtra, (12) Dhananjaya of Kusthalapura and other *Dakshinapatha* kings

He then (line 21) exterminated, we are told, the following, besides many other kings of *Aryavarta*.

(1) Rudra-deva, (2) Matila, (3) Naga-datta, (4) Chandravarma; (5) Ganapati-Naga, (6) Naga Sena, (7) Achyuta, (8) Nandin; (9) Balavarma.

The emperor then made all the kings of the forest countries (Atavika-rajās) his servants. He then compelled (line 24) these 'Pratyanta-nripatis' (frontier or neighbouring kings)

(1) Samatata; (2) Davaka, (3) Kamarupa, (4) Nepala, (5) Kartripura, and 'other countries'

He then reduced.

(1) The Malavas; (2) The Arjunayanas; (3) The Yaudheyas, (4) The Madrakas, (5) The Abhiras, (6) The Prarjunas, (7) The Sanakanikas; (8) The Kakas, (9) The Kharapatikas, and other tribes

He was paid (line 23) various respectful tributes like personal service, presentation of maidens and 'garuda' tokens, the entrustment of their own territories for his enjoyment, and willing obedience by (1) The Daivaputras, (2) The Shahis; (3) The Shahanushahis, (4) The Sakas, (5) The Murandas, (7) The Simhalas, and (8) other islanders.

Lines 26—7 and 30 give the panegyrics of the emperor, already mentioned. Line 29 gives his genealogy and describes the pillar erected by him as an arm, as it were, of the earth proclaiming his fame as a conqueror of the world, as one who departed to Indra's world to enjoy its pleasures. Lines 31—33 conclude the whole with a reference to the 'Sandhivigrahika Maha-Dandanayaka' Kumaramatya Harisena (the son of Dhruvabhuti Khadyatapakika, the devoted servant of the emperor) who composed the verses. It also refers to another

executive officer, Maha-Dandanayaka Paramabhattacharaka Tila-Bhattaka.

DR FLEET ON THE ABOVE DOCUMENT

This very important record has naturally attracted the attention of the scholars engaged in the study of the dynasty Dr Fleet, with characteristic erudition, tried to identify some places and kings, but left the majority alone on account of the difficulty which they presented. For example, he acknowledged that, with regard to Achyuta and Nagasena, nothing was known. With regard to Pushpapura, he surmised that it might be either Pataliputra or Kanyakubja (which was also known as Kusumapura), he would surely identify it with the former but for the facts (1) that no inscriptions of the dynasty have been found there till Skandagupta's time, (2) that Pataliputra is not expressly mentioned as the capital even in inscriptions of Chandra-Gupta II (which mention it) and (3) that the earlier inscriptions of the dynasty are seen more in the vicinity of the latter place. With regard to the Kota family, tribe or dynasty, again, Fleet was able to make no suggestion. With regard to Kaurala, he changed it into 'Kairala' and then corrected it into 'Kerala' on the ground that he knew of no place or city of the name of Kairala. By changing Kauralaka into Kairalaka and Keralaka, Fleet postulated the conquest of Kerala by the king Pishtapura he identified correctly with Pithapuram in Godavari District. With regard to 'Giri-Kautturaka,' Fleet identified it with Kailas-Kotta on the Mahendragiri hill, but as, by this interpretation, Svamidatta would have to be made the king of two localities whereas the inscription uniformly mentions one, he was disposed to believe that Kottur was a Dravidian place¹ and that it was probably Kottur in Pollachi Taluk, Coimbatore District. The forest countries he identified with the lands between Madhura and Narmada,—practically modern Central India. '*Pratyanta-nripatis*' he doubtfully interpreted as the frontier or neighbouring states. Lastly² he identified Erandapalla with

¹ Sewell's Antiquities, I, p. 222

² J. R. A. S. 1898, p. 369

Erandol in Khandesh district To this list of identifications, we may add Kielhorn's equation of Kaurala with Kurala, that is, the Colair Lake.¹

DR. VINCENT SMITH'S ELABORATION

Dr. Vincent Smith gave flesh and blood to the theory on the basis of the identifications made by Dr. Fleet Taking his identification of Kerala, Kottur and Khandesh, he added to the list by regarding Palakka as Palghat, Devarashtra as Maharashtra. As a result of this, he was able to make a connected theory of Samudragupta's conquests and raise him to the position of an Indian Napoleon whose arms were felt from the Himalayas to the extreme south of the peninsula After subduing as many as eleven chiefs and kings of the Gangetic plain, as well as many forest tribes, monarchies and republics within and beyond the frontier, in short, after reducing North India, Samudragupta, says Vincent Smith, started on a splendid campaign to the land south of the Vindhya Marching through the area now forming Chota Nagpur, he continues, Samudragupta first attacked and reduced King Mahendra of Southern Kosala, then subdued the chiefs of the forest area between Orissa and the Central Provinces, one of whom was called Vyaghra-raja, and then advanced southward along the coast. Vanquishing the chief of Pishtapuram (Pithapuram in the Godavari District) and the hill-forts of Mahendragiri and Kottura (Ganjam District), Samudragupta next reduced Mantaraja on the banks of the Colair lake (in regard to which he accepted Kielhorn's view) and the Pallava king of Vengi between the Krishna and the Godavari as well as the Pallava king of Kanchi, whose name was Vishnugopa. After subduing another Pallava chief named Ugrasena at Palakka (Palghat), Samudragupta turned to the north and began his homeward march along the West Dakkan, subduing on the way the kingdoms of Devashtra (Mahratta country) and Erandapalli (Khandesh)

¹ Ep Ind, VI (1900-1) p 3, foot note

"This wonderful campaign which involved more than 3000 miles through difficult and unknown country", surmised Vincent Smith, "must have occupied a number of years" And he assigned it to the period ending with A D 340

A DEFECTIVE INTERPRETATION

This roseate account has been found to be defective in several respects¹ In the first place, the relative chronology of the conquests of the Gupta emperor as laid down by Vincent Smith is not supported by the inscription itself He believes that the Southern campaign began *after* the conquest of North India, but the inscription mentions the Southern campaign first And though there is nothing in the inscription to show that it adopted a chronological order, yet the presumption must be in favour of the priority of the Southern campaign in case other evidences do not conflict with it, and scholars like Prof Dubreuil and Dr Bhandarkar do in fact favour the theory of an earlier date for the march against the South

Secondly, the interpretations of some of the geographical terms given by Dr Fleet, Kielhorn and Vincent Smith, do not stand scrutiny The expression 'Paishtapurakamahendragirikautturaka-Svamidatta' was interpreted by Dr Fleet and Smith as mentioning Pithapuram, Mahendragiri and Kottur, but Prof Dubreuil² points out there is no reference to Mahendragiri at all, and that the term should be translated as 'Mahendra of Paishtapura' and 'Svamidatta of Giri-Kotturaka' (that is, the fort of Kottura on the hill) The result of this interpretation would be that some of the perplexing elements in the political geography of Vincent Smith would be removed Again, Erandapalla (or Airandapalla) was identified with Erandol in Khandesh by Dr Fleet—a fact which was instrumental for the enunciation of the theory that Samudragupta visited

¹ These criticisms are found in Prof Dubreuil's *Ancient History of the Deccan* (English version, 1920), p 58 ff, and Dr Bhandarkar's article in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*

² *Ancient History of the Deccan*, p 59, para (2)

Khandesh on the way to his capital from his supposed conquests. And this was confirmed by the identification of Devarashtra with Maharashtra. But Prof Dubreuil points out that, as the Allahabad inscription mentions Airandapalla next to the Kauttura¹ hill, it should be looked for on the coast of Orissa, and that, as a town of the name is referred to in later inscriptions near Chica-cole, it must be located there². In fact, Devarashtra is proved by later Eastern Chalukya inscriptions to be the country which included Elamanchi Kalingadesa,³ that is the country round Elamanchili in Vizagapatam District. Again, the identification of Kaurala with Kerala, Kauttura with Kottur (Pollachi Taluk) in the Coimbatore District and Palakka with Palghat, points out Prof Dubreuil, is wildly speculative and incorrect. Kerala, it has been suggested, might be the modern railway station of Khurda⁴. Kauttura has been identified with Kothoor in Ganjam District, and Palakka⁵ with the Pallava capital of that name south of the Krishna, which figures in the early Pallava plates of the Nellore District. The logical result of this is that the theory of Samudragupta's going to the extreme South of the peninsula and turning westward as far as Palghat and Coimbatore, etc, vanishes into air. All places belong to the eastern coast of the Dakkan. The reference to Palakka and Vishnugopa, surmises Prof Dubreuil, must have been to a confederacy of chiefs under the lead of Vishnugopa, the Pallava king of Kanchi, whose territory extended beyond the Nellore District as far as the Krishna. Samudragupta, therefore, probably did not even go as far as Conjeeveram,

¹ Ancient History of the Deccan P 59, para (4)

² See Ep Ind, vol XII, p 212, for a grant to an inhabitant of Erandapalli in the Chica-cole region. The inscription is the same as CP No 4 of 1912-13 which is noticed in my *Topographical list* as VG 68-A, where the correct identification of Erandapalli is noticed.

³ See VG I in my *Topo List*, which is the same as CP No 14 of 1908-9, and Madr Ep Rep, 1909, pp 108-9

⁴ By Dr S.K Aiyangar in his *Studies in Gupta History*, p 27

⁵ The Uruvupalli grant was issued from here. See Ep Ind, Vol VIII, p 161

SAMUDRAGUPTA'S REAL ACHIEVEMENTS
IN THE SOUTH

From all these facts, it is clear that Samudragupta's campaign did not cover 3000 miles at all; that, on the contrary, it comprised only the province of Kalinga or Orissa as far as the Pallava kingdom. The Allahabad inscription does not at all "speak of Kerala, Pollachi, Palghat, Mahendragiri, Colair lake, Erandol in Khandesh and Maharashtra. All the kingdoms mentioned in the inscription are situated on the east coast of the Dakkan. The expedition was solely confined to the coast." Further, even this limited undertaking was not quite a success. It was in fact tantamount to failure, due either to the successful resistance of the Pallavas or to Samudragupta's necessity to go to the North in order to meet the rising of the Northern kings. In other words, the Southern campaign was not for establishing an empire after conquering Hindustan, but a preliminary and unfortunate attempt to reduce Kalinga, interrupted untimely by a rising in the North. "After all those rectifications that we have just made, the expedition of Samudragupta presents itself before our eyes in quite another form. It is no more a new Alexander marching victoriously through South India, it was simply the unfortunate attempt of a king from the North who wanted to annex the coast of Orissa but completely failed."

Prof. Dubreuil thus sums up his view of Samudragupta's achievements in the South.

"About 340 A.D. Samudragupta left his capital Pataliputra and marched directly towards the South. First he conquered Southern Kosala, where King Mahendra was reigning in the vicinity of Sirpur and Sombalpur. He then crossed the forests that are to the south of Sonpur and found there the small kingdom of Mahakantara, which means 'the great forest', and where the Vyaghraraja, the tiger king, was reigning. Then he reached the coast of Orissa. Mantaraja, king of Korala, Mahendra of Pishtapura, Svamidatta of Kottura, a citadel on the top of a hill, and Damana of Erandapalli tried to stop him,

but were captured Samudragupta now prepared to make new conquests, when he was opposed by a confederacy of all the kings that reigned near the mouths of the Godavari and Krishna, the most powerful of them being Vishnugopa, the Pallava king of Kanchi. The other kings were Nilaraja of Avamukta (unidentified), Hastivarman of Vengi, Ugrasena of Palakka, Kubera who reigned in Devarashtra, and Dhananjaya whose capital was Kosthalapura. Samudragupta being repulsed by the kings of the Eastern Deccan, abandoned the conquests he had made in the coast of Orissa and returned home"¹

It may be added that the places mentioned in the inscription are not in geographical order. The Mahakantara on the borders of Orissa and Bundelkhand was apparently the northernmost territory in this list. Inscriptions of kings named Vyaghrarajas have been obtained in the 5th century from the vicinity of Ganj and Dachne in Bundelkhand. Its reduction by the Gupta forces earlier than the other parts is natural. But Korala (or Khurda station), Pishtapura, Kottura, Erandapalli, Kanchi and Devarashtra, are all mentioned promiscuously without any geographical order. Consequently it is difficult to say where the places Avamukta and Kasthalapura, unidentified as yet, have to be located. Kasthalapura, it has been suggested, might be connected with Kusasthali, a river south of the Krishna mentioned in the Tamil poem *Kalingattupparam* ². It might be either Koradala, eleven miles west of Sompeta in the Ganjam District, or any of the Kotapalles figuring in Ganjam (six miles south of Sompeta) Krishna and Nellore Districts, if the philological variation of 'Kosthalapura' into 'Kotapalli' in the course of ages is possible. With regard to Avimukta, it is only another name for Kasi and it must be some place in the coast named after the great centre of Hinduism. As the name of its local king is given to be Nila, and as Niladri is another name for Puri, one is tempted to connect Avimukta with that celebrated place in an earlier stage of its legendary greatness. But there is no

¹ Ancient History of the Deccan, p. 61

² Dr. Krishnasami Aiyangar in his *Studies in Gupta History*, p. 27, note I

definite warrant to place the Avimukta of King Nila so far North, though it is not impossible.

With regard to the kings who, according to Prof Dubreuil, formed a confederacy under the Pallava king of Kanchi, one or two facts may be noticed. Mahendravarman of Pishtapura¹, Hastivarman of Vengi and Ugrasena of Palakka, have been distinctly mentioned by different writers to be Pallavas. A different version is that they were not Pallavas but feudatories of the Pallava empire which had its capital at Conjeeveram. Mahendra, it is now certain, was not a Pallava at all. He was not improbably the last of the 'Brihatpalayana' kings who was shortly after overthrown by the Salankayanas. Hastivarman might be a Salankayana, not improbably the immediate predecessor of Vijayadevavarman with whom began a list of four kings whose inscriptions, from about 350 to 450 A. D., are well-known. Ugrasena might be a Pallava chief, as we distinctly know that Palakka was a Pallava capital, or he might be the local governor under the Pallava rule. It is quite possible that all these chiefs were rallied by the Pallava king of Kanchi and made to oppose the Gupta invader. This surmise of Prof Dubreuil is very probably correct, but it has to be distinctly proved that Samudragupta did not visit Conjeeveram.

SAMUDRAGUPTA IN ARYAVARTA

It is probable that Samudragupta's return to Aryavarta from the Dakshinapatha was caused by the rise of some kings against him there. It is the belief of some writers that it might be due to the fact that he was a younger son, but this is yet to be proved. It is also believed by some that it might have been led by Chandravarman of Pushkarana who, it is maintained, was also the issuer of the Susuniya rock inscription and, according to some, of the Mihrauli pillar inscription too. It is true that the name 'Chandra' occurs in the list of opponents of Samudragupta, but there is no evidence to distinctly

¹ Godavari Gazetteer, p. 18 and p. 233

connect him with Miharauli. But it is quite possible that Chandravarman, who was either the local king of Pokarna or Susūniya or both, rose against Samudragupta together with the others. Rudradeva has been indentified by some with Rudrasena of the Vakataka dynasty, but this is yet to be proved. With regard to the other chiefs—Matila, Naga-datta, Ganapatinaga, Nagasena, Achyuta, Nandi, Balavarman, etc.—we have reasons to believe that the majority of them were Nagas. The Puranas refer to Naga rulers at Padmavati (indentified with Padam Pavaya, 25 miles to the north-west of Narwar) and Muttra. Nagabhatta and Ganapatinaga are clearly Nagas. They might have been subordinate to Chandravarman of Susūniya. Nagasena and Achyuta seem to be repetitions. The coins of a chief named Achyuta have been discovered at Abichchatra, and Samudragupta's opponent might be identified with him. We cannot say whether Samudragupta's victories against these were due to his own offensive or to their provocations. From the fact that he is said to have defeated Achyuta and Naga and taken back Pushpapura, we have reasons to believe that he began as a defender of his heritage, but passed on subsequently to the career of a victorious imperialist.

Samudragupta's reduction of Aryavarta under his sole imperial 'umbrella' can be divided into distinct stages. During the first stage, he dealt with the Naga and other chiefs who might have formed a confederacy against him, and carried the Gupta arms beyond the Jumna river in the west and across the forest lands, till the Vindhyan border in the south. During the second stage, Samudragupta engaged himself in the conquest of the frontier chiefdoms. These were Samatata in the Gangetic delta, Kamarupa further north; Davaka now forming the districts of Bhogra, Dinajpur and Rajshahi north of the Ganges, and the sub-Himalayan States of Nepala and Karttipura (which included Kumaon, Almora, Garhwal and Kangra). The third stage was the conquest or rather conciliation of the tribes—mostly Republican—beyond the Chambal, in modern Rajputana

and the Punjab, like the Abhiras of Rajputana, the Madrakas of the Central Punjab etc. The same was the case with the Shahs or Kushans of Kabul, the Daivaputras or the later Kushans, the Shahanushahis of Bactria, the Murundas of Sindh valley, and so on. All these were in friendly terms with the Gupta monarch. They were not subordinate chiefs, but were interested enough to be in very friendly terms with the new and growing empire.

It is thus obvious that the component States of the Gupta Empire did not belong to the same status. The empire proper extended from the Himalayas to the Vindhya and from beyond the Chambal to the eastern basin of the Brahmaputra. The central portion of this was directly under the emperor, but some parts at least were feudatory chiefs paying tribute. Thirdly, there were the frontier or border States nominally paying tribute, but for all practical purposes independent. Still further beyond, were peoples and tribes who only had friendly communications with the emperor and who were in no way politically connected even in a subordinate capacity with him. The Western Satraps, the Kushans and Sakas of the West Punjab, Kabul and Bactria, the Vakatakas of the Dakkan and the Simhalas of Ceylon, seem to have been in this position. Even taking the parts of India which were directly and definitely subject to the emperor, it is clear that the empire of Samudragupta was extensive enough, though not so extensive as that of Asoka. Though much of the glamour of the 'Indian Napoleon' has been made dim by the iconoclastic character of later research, there still remains to his credit an achievement sufficient to give him the title of a magnificent empire-builder.

SAMUDRAGUPTA AS AN INTERNATIONAL PRINCE

From the fact that Samudragupta had diplomatic relations with the rulers of Gandhara, Kabul, Bactria and Ceylon, we are able to say that he had an international reputation. The communication with Ceylon is said to have begun in this way. King Meghavarna of that country,

who¹ it is certain, was on the throne about A. D. 350, sent two Buddhist monks to Gaya, but they did not find convenient places to stay therein. Meghavarna therefore sent pearls and other tributes to Samudragupta and won his sanction for building an excellent three-storied monastery for the benefit of Ceylon pilgrims to Buddha Gaya. The structure, which is now in the form of a mound, occupied the site north of the Bodhi tree under which Siddhartha became the Buddha. It is remarkable to note that Samudragupta, who seems to have had no direct dealings with the Tamil States, was in close touch with Ceylon. This seems to have been due to direct communication between the Dakkan and Ceylon. The story of the Kalinga Princess Hemamala and the tooth-relic of the Buddha, which is described in the *Mahavamsa* as having taken place in the 9th year of Meghavarna, seems to illustrate this. This Princess, we are told, fled from her country and her father's capital, Dantapura, in consequence of the invasion of a Yavana named Raktabahu, and after staying for sometime in the diamond sands near the mouth of the Krishna, sailed away to Ceylon, where Meghavarna welcomed her and built for her tooth-relic a shrine in the Maha-vihara which, together with the Abhayagiri Vihara, to which it was taken in procession, was ever after a scene of grand festivities lasting for three months every year. Fa-hien describes this festival in 412. We do not know who the Yavana invader was, but he might have been an officer of Samudragupta. In this case, we may suppose that Samudragupta's conquest of Kalinga led, thanks to the

¹ The chronology of Meghavarna has given rise to some confusion. The *Mahavamsa* says that he came to the throne in 808 A. B. This would fall in 325 A. D., if the Buddha's Nirvana took place in 483 B. C. In this case, Meghavarna would have ruled from 325 to 352 A. D. But there would be difficulty if the theory of the Buddha's Nirvana in 543 is accepted. Dr. Sylvain Lévi would place the reign from 352 to 379. In his *Studies in Gupta History* Dr. S. K. Aiyangar is inconsistent and confused. Compare pp. 30—1 and 33. He seems to accept both the views, though later on he distinctly is for 352 to 379. The acceptance of this would place Meghavarna's embassy to Samudragupta about 361. The question cannot be considered to be free from doubt.

Kalinga Princess and the tooth-relic, to the establishment of friendly relations with Ceylon. The very embassy of Meghavarna might have been due to it.

The want of reference in Samudragupta's inscription to the Vakatakas of the Dakkan and the Tamil States further south gives rise to some interesting problems. Did he establish suzerainty over the Vakatakas? We have seen how, according to Prof Dubreuil, he did not go to the Dakkan in his 'dig-vijaya'. One strong evidence in proof of this is the great power possessed by the Vakatakas in this period. Dr Krishnaswami Aiyangar suggests that Samudragupta might have been either on friendly terms with the Vakatakas or even conquered¹ them. He points out that, while Samudragupta performed Asvamedha, the contemporary Vakataka King Rudrasena I or rather his son Prithvisena I had no¹ imperial titles which their predecessor Pravarasena I had professed, thus indicating the transfer of imperial power from the Vakataka to the Gupta dynasty. Again, it has been maintained by some that Rudradeva of the Allahabad pillar inscription might be Rudrasena, the Vakataka, for, in a sense, the Vakataka king might be included among the Northern princes. On the whole, however, the exact relation between Gupta and Vakataka rulers in the period is obscure. The want of reference to Prithvisena I is perplexing. The material at our disposal is yet too scanty to throw much light on the matter. Samudragupta might have regarded the Vakataka kingdom as a buffer state between the empire and the region of the Western Satraps. We know that there were marriage relations between the two dynasties later on, and there might have been an equally friendly understanding in the time of Samudragupta. It is quite probable that the Vyaghrarajas of Bundelkhand acknowledged the rule of one or the other as convenience dictated.

¹ Dr S. K. Aiyangar would place Prithvisena I from the last year of Chandra-Gupta I to a few years at least of Chandra-Gupta II. This seems to err on the side of exaggeration—at any rate in regard to the commencement.

So far as the Tamil States are concerned, we have already seen that no inscriptions refer to them. Some scholars have seen in the celebrated campaigns of Raghu, as described in the 'Raghuvamsa', an echo of the campaigns of Samudragupta. But we have seen that Samudragupta never went to the Kaveri region or the West Dakkan. The theory of Kalidasa's reproduction of Samudragupta's campaign was formulated at the time when Samudragupta was regarded as having conquered South India. We have, therefore, now to conclude that Kalidasa's description is not quite literal, that it was rather a poetic license, that the reference to the Kaveri, the Parasikas, etc., must be attributed to his geographical knowledge rather than treated as a fact of history.

SAMUDRAGUPTA'S GREATNESS

The new theory of Samudragupta's conquests, however, does not take away from him much of his greatness. The empire over which he directly ruled and the high international fame he had, made him eminently fitted to perform the Asvamedha, the great symbol of imperialism, the memorials of which we have got in his coins and in his imperial titles. As a temporal conqueror and as the supporter of 'Dharma', Samudragupta was undoubtedly the greatest man of his day. A great patron of religion and literature, an eminent artist and patron of arts, he must have impressed his contemporaries as much by the beauty of his character as by the efficiency of his valour. At once soldier, statesman, organiser, artist and man of letters, he was indeed a versatile genius. He must have been to the Brahmanical advisers of his court the very embodiment of Dharma. Samudragupta's achievements in the realm of peace in all its multifarious aspects cannot be dealt with here, but it should be stated that to him, more perhaps than to any other sovereign, must be given the proud and privileged position of the saviour of the Hindu culture at a critical time. His pre-eminent place in history is the discovery of archæology and epigraphy, and though the information afforded by these is substantial, still one feels very much dissatisfied with what is

available and hungers for more knowledge of one who is so great and so elusive

We cannot exactly say when Samudragupta's reign ended. As he came to the throne about 335 and as he ruled for a long period—45 or 50 years, to judge from his coins—his death may be assigned to sometime between 380 and 385. Samudragupta's chief queen was named Datta Devi, and he seems to have had a number of sons by her and others, for we are told that he specially chose one of them, the later Chandra-Gupta II, to succeed him. This seems to indicate that this prince was not the eldest son. Unfortunately we have no details. But if Chandra-Gupta was in reality chosen by his father in preference to his elder brother or brothers, we must infer that Samudragupta added to his other talents a fine faculty for judging character, for Chandra-Gupta proved an excellent monarch and did no mean service for the empire created so skilfully and so efficiently by his father.

Expansion of the Gupta Empire

BY PROF. V RANGACHARYA, M A.

Chandragupta II, Vikramaditya (Cn ca, 380 or 385 to 413)

Chandragupta II, the son and successor of Samudragupta, was a worthy son of his father. From the fact that his records give him the title of Vikramaditya, it has been surmised by a number of scholars that he has a better claim than any other sovereign to be regarded as the original of the mythical hero of that name who figures largely in the Indian legends. The suggestion has been vehemently denied by others, Dr Hoernle, for example, preferring to see the original of the legendary Vikramaditya in Yasovarman of Malwa nearly a century and a half later, and Mr Vaidya considering that there was a real Vikramaditya in the first century B C after all. It is not possible to enter into a detailed discussion of the question as it primarily concerns the origin of the Vikrama Era ; but it may be mentioned here that, if there is any truth at all in the glories attributed by the legends to Vikramaditya, the Gupta monarch richly deserves to be regarded as such a hero. Chandragupta II, in fact, seems to be entitled to the name and glory of the greatest monarch of his illustrious line. Chandragupta seems to have been known, to judge from at least two inscriptions, also as Devagupta or Devaraja.

The materials for the study of the reign can, as in the case of his predecessor's, be divided into two classes, inscriptional and numismatic. But these can be substantially supplemented by the singularly interesting account left by Fa Hian, the Chinese traveller, and by literary evidences.

The available inscriptions of Chandragupta II are five in number. Three of them are dated, and two un-dated

The former belong to the Gupta years 82, 88 and 93, corresponding respectively to 400-1, 407-8, and 412-3, A D The earliest is in a cave in the Udayagiri hill, two miles to the north-east of Bhilsa, where a temple dedicated to Vishnu was, if we are to judge from the figures of Vishnu and His Consorts carved outside the cave, excavated¹ The inscription is in the 'box-headed script' peculiar to Central India in this period It is of course in Sanskrit and in prose, and dated on *Ashadha-Sukla-Ekadasī* of G E 82 (A D 401-2) It says that a certain feudatory Maharaja, who belonged to the Sanakanika family (which, we know from the Allahabad *Prasasti* had paid tribute to Samudragupta), endowed something to the shrine The chief's name, which is partly lost, apparently ended with the expression *dhala* His father was Vishnudasa and his grandfather Chagalaga

The second of the inscriptions² is on a stone at the village of Gadhwā in Allahabad district, now deposited in the Calcutta Museum It is in the northern Gupta script and in prose. The emperor's name is mentioned, and of the date portion, the number of the year, 88, is clear The epigraph is in two parts, each recording a gift of ten *dīnāras* for the maintenance of a *sattra* for Brahmans

The third dated inscription³ of Chandragupta II was discovered by Cunningham in 1834 It is engraved on a stone in the rail of the eastern gateway of the great *stupa* at Sanchi It is in Sanskrit prose and the southern script It is dated in *Bhādrapada Chaturthī* (the *paksha* being not given), in G E 93 It is a Buddhist inscription and records that a certain Amrakardava, the

¹Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions* No 3, pp 21-25

²*Ibid*, No 7, pp 36-39 The inscription mentions Pataliputra as apparently the imperial capital The *Dīnara* was adopted from the Roman *Aurei* which had the figure of an eagle to which V A Smith traces the Gupta Garuda

³*Ibid*, No 5, pp 29-34 Fleet does not believe that *Devaraja* was another name for the emperor, but the Vakataka inscriptions corroborate this record

son of Undana and a feudatory of Chandragupta II, gave some village or land, besides a sum of *Dīnāras* for the feeding of the mendicants and the maintenance of lamps by the Aryasangha in the Vihara of Kakanadabota (Sanchi). The merit of the gift was to go to himself as well as the emperor (to whom he was evidently highly indebted). The epigraph gives a clue to the toleration of the Gupta monarch, whom it also calls Devaraja.

The first of the un-dated inscriptions was discovered by Cunningham in 1880. It is in the back wall of the cave at Udayagiri,¹ to which reference has been made already. It is, like the other records, in Sanskrit. Its script is in the northern style. Though not dated, it clearly mentions the name of Chandragupta. On palæographical grounds this can be Chandragupta II only. It records the excavation of the cave shrine to Sambhu at the instance of a Virasena, a Minister of Chandragupta. Virasena (*alias* Saba), we are told, belonged to a hereditary line of ministers. He was in charge of peace and war (*Sandhivigraha*) and belonged to Kautsa Gotra. He knew the meaning of words, logic and the ways of mankind. He was further a poet and a native of Pataliputra. The inscription says that he came here accompanied by the emperor, who was seeking to conquer the whole world, and caused the cave to be excavated.

The second un-dated inscription², which was discovered by Cunningham in 1853, is on a piece of stone found originally in the gateway of Madhura (United Provinces) and now located in the Lahore Museum. The record, which is fragmentary, is in the northern script (with some peculiarities). It says that the son of Samudragupta—it does not name Chandragupta—by Queen Datta Devi, gave some endowment, the details of which are lost. Only that

¹Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions*, No 6, pp 34—36

²Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions* No 4, pp 25—28. Though the extant portion does not name Chandragupta, there is no doubt of his being mentioned in the missing portion.

part of the record which gives the Gupta genealogy is extant

THE COINS OF CHANDRAGUPTA II

Passing on to the second source of the history of the reign, namely the coins¹, the most important point to be realised is that Chandragupta II was not only the issuer of gold coins like his father, but also of silver and copper coins. The silver coins were issued for the first time by him, and the copper coins almost exclusively by him among the Gupta sovereigns. Chandragupta's gold coins which were at first called *Dinari*² and later on *suvarnas*, were even more abundant and versatile than those of Samudragupta. He continued the Archer and Tiger-slayer types of his predecessor with some modifications. In the former, for example, Lakshmi (surmised by V A Smith to be an adaptation from the Indo-Scythian Ardochro) is given an open lotus seat instead of a four-footed throne,—a truly nationalistic change. The Archer types are the most common of Chandragupta's coins and indicate, it is believed, by their modes the geographical range of their circulation as well as the transitional periods of their issue. It has been surmised, for instance, that the Throne reverses indicate an earlier period as well as circulation in the northern provinces, while the Lotus reverses indicate a later period and circulation in the central and eastern provinces. A single coin

¹These are dwelt upon exhaustively and from every scientific standpoint by Vincent Smith in *The coinage of the early or Imperial Gupta Dynasty* (reprinted from the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*) and by Mr John Allan in his *Catalogue of the coins of the Gupta Dynasties and of Sasanka, king of Gauda* (1914). These supersede all earlier works on the subject which are copious. In his little book, *The coins of India* (Heritage of India series 1922), Mr C J Brown gives an excellent summary in pp 40-49. All the three works contain plates which can be directly consulted. Rapson's *Indian Coins* (1897), pp 24-5, is still useful.

²One general fact to be noted regarding Gupta coins is that the obverse contains the conventional forms of the king and the reverse a mythological figure like Lakshmi. For the very few exceptions see V A Smith's *Catalogue*, pp 13 and 16.

which has both the Lotus and Throne¹ reverses suggests a connecting link. All these suggestions however have yet to be definitely proved. One thing is certain, however, namely, that the Archer types are the most conservative of the coins of Chandragupta and indicate, by the Kushan dress in earlier instances, a contrast to the other types which are distinctly nationalistic. Even in these coins, however, the general tendency to growing orthodoxy is seen by the replacement of the conventional Kushan dress by the Hindu waist-cloth and sash. Passing on to the Tiger-slayer type, the change introduced by Chandragupta was the substitution of a lion in place of the tiger. The lion either combats or retreats² or is trampled upon. While the Tiger-slayer type of Samudragupta (which, it may be noted, is unique and characteristically national) had apparently the Ganga with the Makara on the reverse. Chandragupta's Lion-slayer type has on its reverse the figure of Lakshmi seated on a couchant lion and holding a lotus (or fillet, *pasa*, symbolical of the earth-girding sex) in her hands. All the successors of Chandragupta continued the Lion type, showing that the Guptas were very proud of the symbology depicted therein. One unique variety of it shows Chandragupta attacking the lion with a sword. Another type of Chandragupta's coins is the one named after the *chhatra* or umbrella figuring in it. It may be regarded as a variant of the standard model. On its obverse there is the figure of the

¹There are several varieties of each of these types. Vincent Smith suggests, though hesitatingly, the derivation of the devices from the Persian Darics. See his *Coinage etc.*, p. 18.

²The distinction between the combatant and retreating lion was first made by Vincent Smith. Others, with more correctness, do not see the difference between the two. But the other varieties pointed out by Vincent Smith are obvious. This writer would trace the Gupta lion and tiger obverses to the Greek Heracles contending with the Nemean lion. Though he is "not able to show any clear connection between the Greek and Indian designs", he still sees a Greek look in the retreating lion and feels persuaded "that its spirited design was inspired by western models" (*Ibid.*, p. 20). To one who cannot see a spirited design only in western models, the Greek look of the retreating lion may not be obvious!

standing king, whose right hand sacrifices at an altar and left hand rests on a sword-hilt, and by his side there is a boy holding an umbrella over his head. The reverse shows Lakshmi standing upon a blossoming lotus, which Vincent Smith mistook for a dragon, (see his *catalogue* p 14 and 91), with fillet or lotus in her hands¹ Chandragupta issued a new coin, usually styled the Horseman type, which his successor afterwards adopted as his most favourite model. The figure of the horseman² had once been employed by the Bactrian Greeks and Sakas, but the Gupta rendering of it is, as Brown points out, original and spirited—a change which Vincent Smith failed to notice. The king rides on horseback. He is either fully clothed or has a waist-cloth the long sashes of which fly behind. He faces either to the right or left, and has either a sword or a bow. The horse is fully caparisoned in the Indian fashion, with a plume on its head. Sometimes there is the figure of the crescent too. The reverse of this type contains, as in Samudragupta's Veena coins, the figure of Lakshmi seated on 'a wicker stool'³ and holding lotus and fillet in her hands. The rarest of the gold coins of Chandragupta is the one known to numismatists as the Couch⁴ type, which seems to have been derived from the Veena model of Samudragupta. Here the emperor is seated on a high-backed couch. His right hand hold aloft a lotus. His left

¹The Goddess stands either full or three-quarter. Sometimes she stands on an altar. In some coins she is in the walking posture.

²Vincent Smith divides the coin into two types as the horse faces right or left, but Allan rejects this classification on the grounds that the same fabric is seen in both cases and that it is the presence or absence of the symbol on the reverse that should be regarded as the true criterion for classification.

³V. A. Smith ascribes this to the Greek coin bearing the figure of Demeter. See p 24 of his *Catalogue*.

⁴One is reminded of the *couch* which is used in Tamil inscriptions synonymously with the throne. Vincent Smith notes that it was an imitation from Indo-Scythian coins and draws attention to figures in the same attitude in the Amaravati sculptures of the 2nd century A.D. See his *Catalogue*, p. 18.

hand rests on the side of the couch. On the reverse there is Lakshmi seated on a throne with a lotus or fillet in her hands. The emperor calls himself *Vikrama* (Cf. Samudragupta's *Parakrama*)¹ and *Rupakriti* in these coins.

In regard to the silver coins which, as we have already seen, Chandragupta issued for the first time, there is the warrant for the belief that they were issued immediately after the reduction of the Western Kshatrapas in whose province they seem to have circulated. The model was that of the conquered people, which in turn had been based on the Græco-Bactrian *hemi-drachm*, but in place of the Kshatrapa *chautya* there was introduced the Gupta Garuda (which Vincent Smith has mistaken for a winged peacock) and in place of the Saka era, the Gupta era (with the additional letter *vo* for *varshe* or year). Further the Kshatrapa coins had contained only the conventional head to represent indiscriminately all kings, but Chandragupta introduced his own portrait. All these changes, together with the slightly altered clusters of dots representing the rayed sun, are easily intelligible. It must be noted here that the silver issues of Chandragupta's mints were very small when compared with those of his successors, and this can be explained only on the basis of the lateness and smallness of his silver mintage.

The copper coins of Chandragupta II—his predecessors had not issued any on account of the abundance of the Kushan coins which were still in circulation—were of nine different kinds (though Vincent Smith notes only four). In eight of these, there is the figure of Garuda with the name of the emperor in the reverse and the head or bust in the obverse. In the ninth model there is the reproduction of the *Chhatra* type with a fine *kalasa* with flowers and leaves hanging down its sides in the reverse. The king has often flower in his hands, as well as an attendant holding a *chhatra*. The Garuda has sometimes a snake in its mouth. Sometimes the bird stands on an altar and is represented

¹To the types given above Vincent Smith adds a Javelin type which is most singular in having a reverse in which the king and queen are seated in a Couch. He sees a Macedonian influence in it. *Ibid* p 17

with or without human arms¹ The copper coins, in short, are distinguished in the obverse by devices of the umbrella, the standing king, the bust or head of the monarch The Bust type is an imitation of the gold coins of Huvishika.

THE LEGENDS ON THESE COINS

The legends on Chandragupta's coins are as poetic and picturesque as those on Samudragupta's The Archer type has on its obverse *Deva-sri-Maharajadhiraja-Sri-Chandraguptah* The Couch type has the same in the genitive, some specimens however having the additional terms *Vikramaditya* and *Rupakriti* The reverse of all these has the simple and short legend *Sri Vikramah*. In the obverse of the Chhatra type we find, in addition to the simple expression *Maharajadhiraja Sri-Chandraguptah*, the metrical legend *Kshitim avajitya sucharitaih divam jayati Vikramadityah* (Having conquered the earth, by his good deeds, Vikramaditya conquers heaven). The Lion-slayer type has got the epithets *Narendra-chandra*, *Simhavikramah*, *Narendrasimha-Chandraguptah*, besides this verse in the Vamsastha metre

Narendrachandra (h) pratitha (sriya) divam
Jayatyajeyo bhuvī Simhavikramah

The Horseman type gives the epithets *Parama-bhagavata* and *Ajita-vikramah* The silver coins have *Paramabhagavata-Maharajadhiraja Sri Chandragupta Vikramadityah* and *Sri Gupta-kulasya Maharajadhiraja Sri Chandragupta*

¹The following excellent summary of Chandragupta's coins by Mr Allan is worth quoting "The coins of Chandragupta display considerable originality of type In his reign the throned goddess is replaced by the purely Indian type of a goddess seated on a lotus The Couch type and the Umbrella type are original He also introduced the Horseman type which became so popular with his successor Samudragupta had represented himself in combat with a tiger, and Chandragupta developed this idea in four distinct types in which he is represented slaying a lion, with legends descriptive of his prowess and strength His reign is chiefly remarkable for the introduction of a currency in silver and copper, the former of which was considerably extended by his successors, Kumaragupta I and Skandagupta "

Vikramadityasya, together with the title *Vikramanka*. The copper coins have the simple titles of *Sri Chandragupta*, *Sri Vikramadityah* and sometimes *Maharaja*.

THE INFERENCES FROM THEM

The historical lessons we are able to derive from these epigraphs and coins are indeed very interesting. The latter show that the emperor was physically a strong man, capable of fighting with lions, and intellectually a versatile and accomplished expert in the arts of peace and war. They seem to indicate that, as a man, Chandragupta was as amiable and gifted as his illustrious father. From literary works of the period as well, which we shall presently refer to, we find that Chandragupta was personally a bold and daring adventurer who did not hesitate to go into the strongholds of his most deadly enemies in order to accomplish his objects. From these works we also understand that he was regarded as as much a poet as Kalidasa and others. No doubt the version which classes him with Kalidasa and other literary luminaries is not quite trustworthy in details, but the very existence of the legend and its incorporation into literary tradition indicates the great reputation which Chandragupta had for literary accomplishments. Chandragupta was also a man of toleration. His orthodoxy is clear in his coins and the majority of the inscriptional records, but one of the latter (the Sanchi epigraph) indicates his friendship with the professors of the Buddhistic creed. These materials show that Chandragupta II ruled over an empire which included regions which had not been reduced by his father, which extended in the west as far as the sea, while literature and Vakataka inscriptions indicate that his influence extended southward as far as the extremity of the Vakataka kingdom. One other inference we are able to make is that Chandragupta was an excellent administrator. The abundant currency he issued shows a long reign of comparative peace and the devotion of the people to the pursuits of trade and enrichment.

RELATIONS WITH THE VAKATAKAS

The endeavours of Chandragupta II to carry the Gupta empire to greater glories than those achieved by his father are particularly obvious in two directions, namely, his relations with the Vakatakas and his relations with the Western Kshatrapas. Light is thrown on the former of these by the records of the Vakatakas as well as a few literary references of the period. The Vakataka kingdom was at this time ruled by Rudrasena II, the son and successor of Prithvisena I, the conqueror of the Kuntalas. We do not know exactly when Rudrasena II came to the throne, but we can learn from the researches of Dr Vincent Smith that he must have married Prabhavati, the daughter of Chandragupta II, about the year 395 A D. It is very probable that Rudrasena had already ruled for a few years before he married the Gupta princess. It is also probable that, in bestowing his daughter on the Vakataka king, Chandragupta pursued a policy of wise conciliation inspired by his desire to checkmate the Western Kshatrapas who, as will be shown presently, were rather restless in the latter part of the 4th century. The immediate result of this marriage was the practical control of the Guptas over the Dakkan. The events which happened subsequently seem to have gone to emphasise this control. Rudrasena seems to have lived only for a very few years after his marriage with Prabhavati. About 400 A D he was succeeded by his young sons Divakarasena and Pravara-sena II, and the actual administration of the kingdom was carried on by the talented queen-dowager in the name of the boy kings for 18 years at least. Gupta by birth and Vakataka by marriage, this lady immortalised herself not only by an efficient administration but by her religious ardour and services to the Srisaïlam temple in the southern border of the Vakataka kingdom. The legends of the temple say that Chandravati (probably another name for Prabhavati), the daughter of the Gupta monarch, conceived

a passion for the God on the Srisaila hill and offered every-day a garland of jasmine flowers¹ to him. Queen Prabhavati probably gave, as Prof Dubreul suggests, either a daughter or grand-daughter of hers to one Madhavavarman and made him the governor of the eastern parts of the Dakkan². It was this Madhavavarman that founded the Vishnukundin dynasty. That is why he declares himself to be the husband of the Vakataka princess and the adorer of the God of Srisailam. But the marriage of the Vakataka princess with Madhavavarman need not have taken place in the reign of Chandragupta II.

The practical supremacy of the Guptas over the Vakatakas must be obvious to one versed in the circumstances. Queen Prabhavati must have been a closely connecting link. Her frequent visits to her father's capital and court, must have had a large influence in bringing the two lines together, which the common danger from the Western Kshatrapas must have fostered. The misfortunes of the queen—the death of her husband and the necessity to carry on the administration for many years—must have still further increased the bond. We can almost imagine the Vakataka prince, the grandson of the Gupta emperor, being brought up in the Gupta capital and initiated into all the political notions and prejudices of the northern dynasty. It was a circumstance which would not only have enabled the Gupta political power to be supreme over the south but facilitated

¹See Madras Epigraphical Report for Aug. 1915, pp. 91–94 for a detailed account of the place. The Government Epigraphist has committed the incredible blunder of confounding the Gupta and Maurya Chandragupta with one another. The inscriptions (see my *Topographical list*, KI 446–489 P, which includes Mackenzie's collections too) do not mention Prabhavati or Chandravati. The exact durations of the reigns of Divakara Sena and Pravarasena II, are not known. The Vakataka records refer to the 13th year of the former and 18th year of the latter during the regency of the queen. But some have taken both these kings to be one and the same. Indeed a third name Damodarasena is also held to refer to the same. See for example Krishna-swami Aiyangar's *Gupta Studies*, p. 4. The question is discussed in detail in the chapter on the Dakkan history.

²Ancient History of the Deccan (1920), pp. 74 and 90.

the expansion of the Gupta culture into the Dakkan and from there to the further south

A clue to this is afforded, as has been already said, by literature. A dramatic work called *Kuntalesvara-dautya*¹ (or *Kuntasadautyam*) which has been ascribed to Kalidasa, says that Kalidasa was once sent by Vikramaditya to go to the court of Kuntala (that is, the Vakataka kingdom which included the Kuntala country) and see how the administration was carried on and that he reported, on his return, that Kuntalesa was, in consequence of his having placed the burden of administration on the emperor, devoting himself to a life of pleasure. This is only another way of saying that, secure of the protection of his grandfather, Pravarasena had an easy and prosperous administration, and he utilised this security for the pursuit of literature and pleasure. We know that Pravarasena² wrote the Prakrit kavya *Setubandha* and that, according to one commentator (the author of the *Ramasetupradīpa*), was revised by Kalidasa at the suggestion of the Gupta monarch. As the commentator says that this work was composed by the Vakataka king immediately after his accession, we have to suppose that the mission of Kalidasa referred to above must have taken place subsequent to the composition of the *Setubandha* by the Kuntala king.

RELATIONS WITH THE WESTERN SATRAPS

While the Gupta emperor thought it wise to pursue a policy of friendliness and intermarriage with the Vakatakas, he deemed it necessary to adopt an entirely different attitude towards the Western Satraps. We do not know what this was due to. Vincent Smith suggests plausibly that the Gupta monarch's ambition as well as the desire to end a dynasty of impure foreign rulers who differed in race, creed and manners, was responsible for it. From the coins of the Western Kshatrapas we know that, after 348 A. D., the

¹The work is referred to in detail in the chapter on literature. Here it may be simply pointed out that Rajasekhara, Bhoja and Kshemendra mention it.

²Bana refers to this. For other notices see the chapter on literature.

Kshatrapas had, for some reason or other, become completely eclipsed Prof Rapson believes that it might be due to some foreign trouble Probably it was caused by the encroachments of the rising Guptas on the one hand and the Vakatakas on the other. Samudragupta, as we have already seen, had been approached by the Satraps (who may be identified with the Sakas referred to in the Allahabad inscription) in a conciliatory and friendly manner. Apparently about the close of the 4th century, there was a restlessness among the Sakas who were then under the Satrap Rudrasimha, son of Satyasimha It was the encroachments of this king perhaps that made Chandragupta proceed against them. His alliance with the Vakatakas might have been due to the desire for a joint effort against the Sakas.

As regards the date of the undertaking of hostilities against the Sakas, we can make a fairly definite estimate Chandragupta was making donations in the Udayagiri cave whither he came, we are told, on his way to conquer the world, in 401 A D We also know that the last of the coins of the Kshatrapas is dated S 31 x that is, sometime between 388 A.D and 397 A.D From all these facts we have to suppose that the war between the Kshatrapas and the Guptas took place during the last two or three years of the 4th century We have already seen how on the authority of Vincent Smith, we can attribute the Gupta-Vakataka marriage, which was just prior to the actual declaration of hostilities with the Sakas, to 395 A D The reduction of the Kshatrapa territory which about included West Malwa, Gujerat and Kathiawar must have taken place between 395 and 402, roughly A few years this side and that may have to be added in the light of future researches

The Gupta war against the Sakas is amply demonstrated by the supersession of the Saka currency by the Gupta, to which we have already referred. Literature also comes to our aid and throws some interesting side-lights on the war In his *Harshacharita*,¹ Bana refers to an incident in

¹Cowell's Translation, p 194

the war He says: *Aripure cha parakalatra-kamukam Kamini-vesha-guptah Chandraguptah sakapatim asatayat* (At Aripura, Chandragupta who was in the guise of a lady, killed the Saka chief who longed for another man's wife) The commentator (Sankara) has interpreted this passage to the effect that the *acharya* of the Sakas made advances to Dhruvadevi, the wife of Chandragupta's brother (*Bhūatr-jaya*) and that Chandragupta killed him after assuming the guise of the lady, in the midst of a number of soldiers who were dressed as her women attendants This passage of the commentator is interesting for its proving that the Chandragupta of the *Harshacharita* was the Gupta emperor, for Dhruvadevi was a Gupta But the commentator has made one mistake Dhruvadevi was, we know from inscriptions, not the wife of Chandragupta's brother but of Chandragupta himself The Bhilsad¹ stone inscription (dated G E 96, A D 415-6) for example, distinctly says that he was the son of Chandragupta by Dhruvadevi We have to suppose that, in this as well as the reference to the *Acharya* of the Sakas, the commentator is inaccurate Fortunately, the *Sinagaraprakasika*, an anthology discovered recently by the Office of the Madras Oriental MSS Library and attributed to Bhoja, gives extracts from a drama called *Devi-chandraguptam*, which throws true light on this incident These extracts say that Chandragupta entered the *Skandavara*, the camp of his enemy, at Alipura² in the guise

¹Gupta Inscriptions, No 10

²The printed editions of the *Harshacharita* have *Nalinapura* or *Aripura* but the *Devi-chandraguptam* calls the enemy's city *Alipuram* Alipuram, it seems to me, might be Alina 14 miles to the north-east of Nadiad, taluk headquarters in Khaira district, Gujerat. The village has been the site of the discovery of two copper-plate charters—one of Dhruvasena II and the other of 'Siladitya VII—for which see *Ind Antq*, Vol VII, p 80 and *Gupta Inscriptions* No 39, p 171 ff Prof Krishna-swami Aiyangar says "There is a place called Alirajapura and a district dependent thereon, but on the mere name it would be hazardous to suggest an identification." The Professor apparently refers to Alina, but I cannot understand why an identification on the basis of names is hazardous when political and geographical circumstances favour it. He then refers to the mention of an Aripura in

of a woman for killing the lord of the Sakas and that, when he was reminded by the Vidushaka of the extreme danger he ran by going in the midst of so many enemies, he replied that there was not much danger at all as he was exactly in the position of a lion emerging out of his cave against a herd of elephants. It is clear from all this that Chandragupta's queen probably fell a prisoner in the hands of the Sakas in the course of the campaign against the Satrap, and was rescued from the importunities of the Saka monarch, Rudrasimha, by the Gupta emperor, in the guise of his queen. It is unfortunate that the *Devi-chandraguptam* has been lost. Its discovery is bound to be of unique interest¹

It was apparently the Saka conquest that made Chandragupta assume the title of Vikramaditya in imitation of the original hero of Malwa who founded the Vikrama era of 56 B.C. By slaying the last of the Satrap kings and by annexing their territory, Chandragupta extended the Gupta empire over Malwa, Gujerat and Saurashtra. One effect of this was that Ujjain, the famous centre of learning, became the second capital of the empire. Again, by extending the borders of the empire to the Arabian sea, Chandragupta brought the advantages and resources of the magnificent seaports of the coast to the imperial coffers. The contact with the coast is also maintained by some to have promoted the direct sea-borne commerce of India with Egypt, Europe and other parts in the West, as well as the interchange of ideas from one part to the other. The extent to which this interchange of ideas took place is generally described in accordance with the prejudices of particular scholars. Some scholars exaggerate

Kalinga by the *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai* and makes the transparently obvious remark that it "seems too far east even for a Saka raid at this period." It is, to say the least, curious that a scholar who deprecates geographical identification on the mere basis of names passes on, in the very same breath, to a suggestion on the same basis though his conclusion is rightly against the identification.

¹V. A. Smith does not regard the tale as 'genuine history,' but the literary tradition is too particular and striking to justify the scepticism.

the invasion of European ideas on literature, art and science through the Alexandrian merchants. There is perhaps a tendency in the other school to go to the other extreme, but on the whole the influence of India on the external world was far more momentous in this period than the influence of the external world on India.

ADMINISTRATION

The Gupta empire now reached the height of its glory and the maximum of its size. By annexing the territories of the Sakas and by exercising a large influence, or possibly even control, over the Vakatakas, Chandragupta carried the south-western and southern limits of the Gupta empire to those of the Mauryas under Asoka. It is quite possible that the Salankayanas of the East Dakkan were under the control of the Vakatakas and therefore of the Guptas. Further south, the Kadambas, Gangas and Pallavas were fast emerging into big powers, but they had no direct dealings with the Guptas. In Hindustan, the empire extended from the Himalayas to the Vindhya and from the Brahmaputra to the middle Punjab. It is almost certain that western Punjab and the States further west were under the Kushan chiefs who succeeded the earlier Kushans and who must have been in touch, sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile, with the Sassanian dynasty of Persia. No records are available about the other parts of the empire upon which light is thrown by the *Prasasti* of Samudragupta, but we may take for granted that, in these cases, there was no change. Both the administrative divisions and arrangements probably continued to be in this reign what they had been in the reign of Samudragupta. The official hierarchy was constituted on the same model. The frontier and friendly States were probably on the same political relationship. One remarkable thing to be noticed in the administration of Chandragupta was the part played by women. We have already seen how Prabhavati was all-powerful in the Dakkan for years. Similarly queen Dhruvadevi seems to have been entrusted with some hand in the

administration of the province of Vaisali (Basarh). Clay seals¹ bearing her name and the name of her son Govindagupta have been discovered in the neighbourhood of Vaisali. It must be acknowledged, however, that the inclusion of the name of the empress with that of a prince in administrative matters and during the life-time of the emperor is rather anomalous. The only way of explaining it seems to be that the seals were dated subsequent to the death of Chandragupta and that the queen-dowager was probably the guardian of Govindagupta, one of the younger sons of Chandragupta, who was in charge of the province of Tīrhut. The seals discovered in this region also include the seals of other princes like Ghatotkachagupta, probably a near member of the royal family whose exact kinship is yet to be ascertained, and of a large number of officers. The very titles of these officers are significant and their importance must be realised by every student of the constitutional theory and practice in this period.

THE CAPITAL

One important question which has to be decided in this connection is whether Pataliputra was the capital of the empire. Vincent Smith says that after his conquests, Samudragupta had shifted the royal residence, though not the official capital, from Pataliputra to Ayodhya (Fyzabad) in Southern Oudh. He is disposed to believe that, owing to the more central situation and traditional greatness of Ayodhya, it might have been the imperial residence and premier city. We do not know how far this is true, though the spurious Gaya epigraph and the reference of Hiuen Tsang to the Gupta monarch's company with the Buddhist philosophers of that place might be regarded as arguments in favour of the theory. At the same time, there is no doubt that Pataliputra was a populous and magnificent city in the 5th century and is described, as we shall presently see, in glowing and eloquent terms by

¹For these excavations of Dr Block, see *Archæological survey of India, Annual Report, 1903-4*, pp 101-120

Fa Hian Literary evidences as well as political circumstances, it may be pointed out here, seem to show that, in the latter part of the reign, Ujjain too was as prominent a seat of government as Ayodhya or Pataliputra. Probably Chandragupta used all the capitals. The exodus to Ujjain seems to have been rather permanent after the annexation of the Kshatrapa territory, though it is difficult to be positive about it. The emperor's desire to keep close watch over the movements of the newly conquered people of the west and to give security to the trade and traffic which, ever since the annexation of their land, had become a source of prosperity to the empire—might have made Ujjain the most important of the capitals in the last years of the reign.

FA HIAN'S ACCOUNT

So far as the effects of Chandragupta's administration on the country and people are concerned, we unfortunately do not possess sufficient illuminating materials. There is one source of knowledge, however, which, though indirect and incidental, is for that reason all the more valuable, and that is the account of the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hian, who visited India in this reign. It is true that the celebrated pilgrim does not mention the name of the emperor, but as we definitely know from Chinese sources that his travels took place between 399 A.D. and 414 A.D., no other sovereign could have been intended. Fa Hian¹ had a purely religious mission. His object was to collect the genuine sacred scriptures of Buddhism for the benefit of the Buddhists of his country who had hitherto access only to mutilated and incomplete collections of the treatises on *Vinaya*. It was in 399 A.D. that the young monk—for Fa Hian was then only 25 years of age—left his native country at the instance of his sovereign. For the next fifteen years he

¹Fa Hian's account has been translated by several scholars,—Beal in the first volume of *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, 2 volumes, 1885, by Legge (Oxford, 1886) and by Giles (1877). For the full bibliographical history, see Vincent Smith's *Early History of India*, 4th Edn. (1924), pp. 24—25.

was engaged in his journey Six of these years he actually spent in India, six in his journey up to India, two in Ceylon and one in transit from Ceylon to China In the course of his extensive journey he visited all the sacred places associated with the life and labours of the Buddha and has left realistic accounts of them He visited all the monasteries where he sought the precious books and relics, and recorded, with a most charming and refreshing naivete and sincerity, their history, together with the life of the monks, the miracles of the Buddha, and other details His narrative is thus a classic on the Buddhistic conditions and methods of worship in the reign of the most orthodox of the Gupta monarchs, but incidentally there are references to social and political conditions Fa Hian visited the principalities or provinces of Udayana (Kabul), Svat, Gandhara, Takshasila, Peshawar, Madhura, the land later on forming Rajputana, the Madhyadesa (by which we have to mean the heart of the Gupta Empire), the various scenes of the Buddha's life and labours in this region which were already far gone in the path of neglect and ruin, Bengal and Ceylon He also gives a hearsay account of the Dakkan In every one of these he describes the absolute, though not relative, strength of Buddhism and the facilities he had for copying the scriptures he wanted His interesting account of the journey from Ceylon to China is an indispensable authority for a knowledge of the Indian trade conditions and colonies in this period All these, however fascinating, are not germane for our present purpose So far as *this* is concerned, there are, in the story of his travels, only a few passages, but these are sufficiently instructive

Fa Hian describes the Madhyadesa—the central part of the empire—in terms which make us believe that the Gupta emperor was able to bestow on the people the benefits of a sound and orderly administration, which enabled them to enjoy much material prosperity Fa Hian says that the people, who enjoyed the warm and equable climate of their land, were opulent and contented Travelling was both free and safe Fa Hian testifies to the mild and sympathetic

character of the judicial administration. There was no capital punishment, he says somewhat surprisingly, except for treason which was chastised with the amputation of the right hand. He notes the absence of judicial torture and the usual punishment of crimes with fines alone. He observes the absence of heavy tolls and other restrictions on trade and traffic. He says that rent was collected from crown lands and that the king's personal servants were paid fixed salaries. One remarkable fact emphasised by the pilgrim with pleasure is that the Buddhistic idea of sanctity for life permeated all classes of the population. There was a complete abhorrence to the killing of animals, to the drinking of wine, and, (curiously enough) to the eating of garlic and onions! There were again, says Fa Hian, no dealings in swine, fowls, and cattle for the purpose of slaughter. The chandalas, butchers and fishermen alone, he notes, dealt in flesh and the slaughter of life. For ordinary purposes, we have reasons to believe from Fa Hian, the people used cowries or shells as currency, coins being presumably used by the rich and higher classes alone. Fa Hian notes the liberal endowment made by the sovereigns and nobles for the Buddhistic monasteries from generation to generation, as the result of which the monks were free from all cares regarding food, housing and luxuries. Donations of houses, fields, gardens, men and cattle were showered by nobles as well as the ordinary householders. The title-deeds were handed from reign to reign, so that there could be no violation of them. The resident priests of the *viharas* were fully provided with mats, beds, food, drink and clothes without stint. Fa Hian speaks with particular admiration of the city of Pataliputra and its people. He refers in detail to the palaces of Asoka and the legends connected with them. He describes the city as highly opulent and the people as vying with one another in practising benevolence and righteousness. He remarks that the nobles and householders founded numerous charity-houses and hospitals where the poor, the crippled and the diseased could get gratuitous treatment. The prosperity of the capital city as described by him forms a strange contrast

to the ruins of the Buddhistic centres Fa Hian found it necessary and profitable to stay at Pataliputra for three years, for though it was the headquarters of an extremely orthodox and beloved Hindu emperor, he found more materials here than in Buddhistic places of worship. During this period of three years he learnt Sanskrit, and copied a number of MSS. in the local Mahayana *vihara*, which he could not get elsewhere in the west in consequence of the system of teaching by memory which was in vogue there. Fa Hian's description of the local monasteries and festivals indicates the advanced state of idol worship, the close co-operation between the Buddhistic and Brahmanical leaders and the inordinate love of gaiety and display which the court and the people indulged in. It would be hard to find a more pleasing picture of harmony and co-operation than the one presented by the pilgrim in this connection.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the late Dr Vincent Smith has remarked that "probably India has never been better governed after the oriental manner than it was during the reign of Vikramaditya". The judgment is all the more acceptable for the reason that Fa Hian himself contrasts the condition of North India with that of the Dakkan in a manner which is quite unfavourable to the latter. We do not know to what part of the Dakkan Fa Hian refers. Dr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar believes¹ that it applies to the Vakataka kingdom and he sees a demonstration of Fa Hian's condemnation in the story that Kalidasa reported to his sovereign that the Kuntala king devoted himself, in consequence of the all-powerfulness of the Gupta monarch in administration, to a life of pleasure, neglecting his proper duty. But Fa Hian could not have referred to the Vakataka country. He, it is almost certain, referred to the unsettled country on the coast, which was either under the Kalinga or Salankayana dynasty. The government of this part of the country was not efficient enough to secure the

¹*Studies in Gupta History*, p 55

safety of person and property Communication was sadly neglected, so that the country was precipitous and the roads dangerous "Those who wish to go there, even if they know the place, ought to give a present to the king of the country, either money or goods The king then deputed certain men to accompany them as guides, and so pass the travellers from one place to another, each party pointing out their own roads and intricate by-paths."

The reign of Chandragupta is not only politically important but highly eventful in the history of literature and arts It is not possible to deal with these subjects here, but it may be noted that some of the most renowned poets and philosophers, Brahmanical and Buddhistic, belonged to his time and court, while the emperor's taste for architecture, sculpture and painting created an atmosphere favourable to the bequeathal, to posterity, of some of the most enduring monuments in the world These subjects are dealt with elsewhere

THE CHARACTER OF CHANDRAGUPTA II

It must now be obvious that, from every standpoint, the reign of Chandragupta II was a glorious epoch in the history of the Guptas and of Hindu India From numismatic evidences we find that the earliest date of his son and successor Kumaragupta was G. E 96 (A D 415) We have therefore to suppose that Chandragupta died in that year or more probably, a year or two earlier The year 413 A D has been generally taken, certainly with plausibility, to be his last year Chandragupta had wielded the destinies of the Gupta empire for about twenty-eight years and, it can be hardly doubted, with the highest credit to himself and the highest benefit to the country To the Brahmanical leaders and scholars he must have been the very incarnation of divinity, and alike in the history of religion, art, literature politics, and statecraft, he has left a name second to none Chandragupta's private life is, as in the case of almost all ancient Hindu monarchs, obscure The few existing records say that he had at least two queens,

namely, Dhruvadevi, the heroine of the *Devi-chandraguptam* and the issuer of the Vaisali seals, and Kubhera Naga the Naga princess and mother of Prabhavati, the queen of the Vakatakas. Chandragupta must have had other queens, but we have no information about them. Both Kumaragupta who succeeded him and Govindagupta who figures in the Vaisali clay seal finds, were the sons of the first and senior queen. The legends of Vikramaditya, if they are to be taken as referring to Chandragupta II, seem to indicate a most amiable and charming personality who loved women simply because they were women! It is quite possible that Chandragupta was a lover of the fair sex as he was a lover of valour, culture, beauty and learning. At any rate, that is what the legends clearly indicate. But apart from this surmise, there remains the solid fact that, as an empire-builder and as a patron of culture, he was the most conspicuous and commanding figure in all India during (roughly speaking) the last fifteen years of the 4th and the first 15 years of the 5th century. To posterity his political work has become nothing, but the results of his patronage of art, literature and all that is likely to elevate and enrich human life, have endured to the present day. Further, the consequences of his instrumentality in that change in the balance of power which eventually saw the absolute and unqualified death of Buddhism before the all-absorbing and all-assimilating Hinduism, have been about and upon the peoples of India through the long vista of the last fifteen centuries. Chandragupta's great civil and military talents, his successful lead of armies to victory and his combination of good government, peace, order and security with the force of full royal authority, must have been big achievements in the eyes of his contemporaries, but the effects of these have passed away, sharing the fate of the work of every other great eastern empire-builder and statesman, but the results of his efforts to illuminate and beautify the world, to help the cause of what he regarded as the true morality, the true creed and the true social structure and manners, have, for good or for evil,

endured And if in the course of centuries the Brahmanical civilization has displayed a marvellous vigour, force, and enduring power, it must not a little be due to the successful endeavours of the great Gupta monarch to engraft what were then regarded as the highest ideals upon what was then regarded as the highest political ambition or achievement.